

Latvian party splits

RIGA, Soviet Union (R) — Latvia's Communist Party split Saturday over its links with Moscow, while 200,000 Lithuanians demonstrated in the sister Baltic republic in support of its declaration of independence. Nearly one third of the 792 delegates to the Latvian party congress, seeking independence for the Latvian state and party, walked out when the conservative majority tried to defer the meeting until mid-year. The radicals, mainly ethnic Latvians, had called on the party to follow the Communists in the Baltic republics of Lithuania and Estonia by forming a party independent of Moscow. The 242-strong group said they viewed the conservative proposal as an attempt to postpone discussion of Latvian independence. They immediately went to another hall in the building and one of their leaders, Juris Rozewald, said: "We will go ahead now and discuss the party programme ourselves." The split, in defiance of appeals from the Kremlin, raised the political tensions between Moscow and the three formerly independent republics by yet another notch.

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Expatriates' department abolished

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government has taken a decision cancelling the expatriates department of the Ministry of Labour as of May, informed sources told the Jordan Times. The Ministry of Interior will take charge of the duties of the department, in attending to expatriates affairs as used to be before the creation of the Ministry of Labour's department, the sources said. The sources added that the government is currently studying other alternatives for expatriates' conferences, of which five were convened so far. This means that the next expatriates conference will not be convened in July as it was scheduled until the alternative course is formulated, the sources predicted.

PLO factions reschuss reshaping PNC

AMMAN (J.T.) — Representatives of Palestinian factions under the umbrella of the Palestine Liberation Organisation Saturday held a preparatory meeting here to establish a new basis for reshaping the Palestinian National Council — the Palestinian parliament in exile.

The meeting, chaired by PNC Speaker Sheikh Abdul Hamid Saeed, discussed several proposals for reshaping the PNC for the next session. The participants are expected to resume discussions Sunday on several proposals and recommendations that would be later referred to the PLO Executive Committee and the respective leadership of Palestinian factions, and to PNC secretariat for their endorsement. The PNC has 432 members in addition to 186 members inside the occupied territories. The meeting was attended by PLO Central Committee member Hani Hassan (Fateh), Saji Salameh (the Democratic Front), Mohammad Mislama (the Popular Front), Bader Abu Al Jabeen (Arab Liberation Front), Abdul Rahim Awadallah (the Communist Party), Subhi Ghosheh (the Popular Struggle Front), representatives of Hamas, the Palestine Liberation Front and several independents.

Hawatmeh urges Hamas to join underground leadership

NICOSIA (R) — The leader of a Palestinian group Saturday urged Muslim fundamentalists to join the underground leadership that is spearheading the uprising against Israel. The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) has on several occasions called for strikes and other protest actions that clashed with those organised by the 28-month-old uprising's unified leadership. "Let all groups struggling against occupation, including Hamas, unite under the unified national leadership," Nayef Hawatmeh, chief of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), said in a statement sent to Reuters. Hamas is opposed to concessions made by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in pursuit of a negotiated solution to the Arab-Israeli question.

U.S. senators die in Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — U.S. Senate minority leader Robert Dole will arrive in Damascus Sunday at the start of a Middle East tour to discuss peace efforts in the region. The U.S. embassy said Saturday, Dole and five senators from the Republican and Democratic parties will visit Syria, Jordan and Israel to discuss efforts to "further the cause of peace in the region," the embassy said in a statement.

Egyptian air force chief replaced

Cairo (R) — President Hosni Mubarak named a new air force commander Saturday, former fighter pilot Major-General Ahmad Abdul Rahman Nasr. He replaced Major-General Ala Badran. The presidential decree gave no reason for the change.

Violent protests rage in Gaza; 19 wounded

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Demonstrators raised the Palestinian flag in the centre of Gaza City Saturday and blocked roads with rubble and blazing tyres during protests over the killing of two Arabs and closure of a mosque earlier in the week.

Hospitals and Palestinian sources reported at least 19 Palestinians injured in the city and other parts of the occupied Gaza Strip — three of them shot by Israeli troops.

Witnesses said troops smashed down the doors of Gaza's Ahli Hospital to search the building for fugitive stone-throwers. Staff at the hospital said they treated 16 people, including women and old men, beaten by troops in the city centre.

In nearby Jabalya refugee camp a 14-year-old boy was shot in the head and rushed to an Israeli hospital, Palestinians said.

A man was wounded in Rafah where residents defied an army curfew to protest at Thursday's fatal shooting by soldiers of a local man.

At least one demonstrator was wounded in a clash with troops in Khan Younis where a 15-year-old boy was shot dead Friday.

A Muslim fundamentalist group claimed responsibility Saturday for the stabbing of a

Jewish student in Arab Jerusalem.

"The Islamic Jihad Movement-Jerusalem" said in a statement released in Beirut that it carried out the attack to commemorate the second anniversary of the expulsion by Israel of one of its leaders, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Awdeh, to South Lebanon in 1988.

The bodies of two Palestinians suspected of collaborating with the occupation authorities were discovered in the occupied lands Saturday, sources said.

The body of Nabil Mayassa, 35, was found beaten and stabbed in the industrial zone of the West Bank town of Ramallah.

Abdullah Makatt, 44, from Jabalya refugee camp, was discovered dead in his cell in Ansar 3, a military detention centre in the Gaza Strip.

An army spokesman confirmed both deaths but had no information indicating why the two were murdered.

Mayassa worked for the Israeli transportation department and owned an auto parts shop. Arab residents of Ramallah claimed he was a well known collaborator.

Makatt was a security prisoner awaiting trial in military court and apparently cooperated with prison authorities, Arab sources said.

A cellmate confessed to hanging Makatt and is now being interrogated, the army spokesman said.

A Palestinian human rights group has said that Israeli tax collection in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was tantamount to pillage.

"What is taking place in the occupied territories amounts to a pillage," Raja Shehadeh, co-director of the West Bank-based Al Haq legal research group, told a news conference.

He said Palestinians were subject to greater tax than Israelis.

Many Palestinians have protested against the tax saying it was unjust and arbitrary and have been imprisoned for refusing to pay it.

Al Haq researcher Khaled Al Batrawi said some unemployed Palestinians had been told to pay thousands of dollars in taxes.

Last September, Israeli authorities closed off the West Bank town of Beit Sahour while tax officials and soldiers seized goods from people who refused to pay taxes.

Lawyer Marc Stephens, who did research for Al Haq study, "Taxation in the Occupied Territories 1967-1989," said Israel had used some of the taxes collected

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Israeli leaders deny contacts with PLO

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Top aides to former Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin and caretaker Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir categorically denied Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat's claims contacts with the Israeli leaders Saturday.

"Yasser Arafat claims contacts with Mr. Rabin at least twice a week and each time I deny it," said a top Rabin aide, who refused to be identified.

The PLO chairman said he had had clandestine contacts with Israeli leaders in an interview on Italy's state-owned RAT television Friday.

"There are many contacts between the Palestinian and Israeli leadership," Arafat said. "For example, Rabin sent an emissary with a message for me. Even Shamir did so."

Avi Pazner, top aide to the caretaker prime minister said that Arafat's announcement was a "total and complete lie, at least in relation to the prime minister."

However, Shulamit Aloni, parliament member of the left-wing Citizens Rights Movement, said Arafat could be telling the truth. "Maybe it's true, and maybe it's not," Aloni told the Associated Press. "But if it is true, why did he wait so long to tell the world, and why now? Why torpedo the Peres-Rabin government before it even had a chance?"

The leader of the centre-left Labour Party, Shimon Peres, dismantled the national coalition government March 15 in a dis-

pute with the right-wing Likud bloc over the U.S.-backed peace proposal.

The five-point initiative called for preliminary talks with the Palestinians to discuss proposed elections in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Labour Party led by Shimon Peres and Rabin supported the plan and now hopes to build a new government dedicated to the advancement of peace.

Former Science Minister Ezer Weizman, dismissed Dec. 31 from the inner cabinet by Shamir for contacts with PLO leaders, said Arafat claims were possible but refused to elaborate.

"Arafat may know what he is talking about," Weizman said. "But I have no idea what other people do and I am not prepared to respond to what Arafat says in other places."

There have been rumours of contact between Israeli and PLO leaders but they have never been confirmed by either side. Israel has banned talks with the PLO.

The possibility of a PLO role in the peace process talks was rejected by both parties even before the national unity government collapsed.

Arafat, who had just finished a two-day visit to Italy, told RAT Friday that the Israeli messages also concerned "some aspects of peace initiatives."

Asked if it was strange that a declared enemy had sent him messages, Arafat replied: "With whom are they going to make peace? With ghosts? No. With me."

Arafat raises fresh spectre of Israeli threat

RABAT (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said Saturday Israel had between 220-250 nuclear warheads and was stealing more Arab land for new Jewish emigrants.

"The situation is becoming more and more dangerous. Each Arab capital can be hit by 10 Israeli warheads," he told a meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

"The Islamic and Arab nations cannot remain with its arms crossed... we have to move from words to action," he said, adding Israel had clear designs on parts of Lebanon and Jordan.

Arafat was speaking at the opening session of the OIC's Jerusalem Committee, convened by Chairman King Hassan of Morocco to coordinate a strategy against increased Soviet emigration to Israel and its effect on Jerusalem.

Arafat said Israel was planning to settle an extra three million Jews from the Soviet Union, eastern Europe and Ethiopia in the region between now and the end of the century, more than doubling the current population of Israel.

"We are faced with a dangerous challenge... Israel aims to occupy more Arab territories," he said.

The Palestinian leader said Falasha Jews from Ethiopia had already been located in a buffer zone in the south of Lebanon maintained by Israel.

This, he said, was the start of an attempt to recognise the dream of "greater Israel," clearly

Gorbachev: Arms pact key at summit

MOSCOW (AP) — President Mikhail Gorbachev said in remarks released Saturday that the success of his summit this spring with U.S. President George Bush will depend on whether arms control agreements are reached.

Gorbachev said in an interview with the TASS news agency released Saturday that the main task of the summit, to be held in Washington, will be to reach agreement on disarmament and arms reduction. "On this depends, mainly, the success of the meetings," Gorbachev said.

The president did not elaborate.

Gorbachev told TASS the unification of Germany will also be discussed at the summit, saying this step must be taken "in a constructive vein, without any damage to anybody."

The Kremlin leader made the remarks after his foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, wound up three days of meetings Friday with U.S. officials in Washington to prepare for the May 30-June 3 summit.

After their Washington talks, Shevardnadze and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker tried to lower expectations that Bush and Gorbachev will be able to sign a treaty sharply reducing intercontinental nuclear weapons.

IPU condemns settlements

NICOSIA (R) — World parliamentarians condemned Jewish settlement in "plundered" Arab land Saturday and called on Israel to withdraw from occupied territory including Jerusalem.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which groups legislators from 113 countries, also urged the convening of an international peace conference to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The resolution was adopted by 595 votes for and 237 against with 99 abstentions at the end of a week-long meeting in Nicosia.

The IPU said a Middle East conference should be attended by all those concerned in the conflict including the Palestine

Liberation Organisation, which it described as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

"Tension in the Mediterranean region cannot be eliminated without a just and lasting solution of the Middle East problem that would restore the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people... and would include Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem and South Lebanon," the resolution said.

The IPU condemned the "continuing colonisation of the occupied Arab territories which creates a deeply disturbing and dangerous situation exacerbated by Israel's organisation of the massive emigration

and illegal settlement of Jews in these plundered lands including Jerusalem..."

France and other Western countries objected to the clause that called for Israeli withdrawal from Jerusalem. They argued that the Jewish western part of the city was not occupied land.

The resolution was passed with support from the Third World, China and the Soviet Union.

It urged the withdrawal of foreign fleets from the Mediterranean region and the non-proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons in the area.

(See related story on page 3)

Iraq: Arabs have same right as enemies to weapons

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein said Saturday that Arab states had as much right as their enemies to possess nuclear and chemical weapons.

Hussein said at the time that Iraq didn't need nuclear weapons because it had binary chemical weapons. INA quoted him as saying Saturday that it was Israel, not Iraq, that had heightened tension in the Middle East.

"We are not the people who step up tensions in the Middle East. He who steps up tensions... is Israel, who occupies the land of Palestinians and commits evil methods of murder every day against the Palestinians," the president told the agency.

Reacting to criticism by U.S. President George Bush to his threat to retaliate against Israel,

Hussein told the country following charges that Iraq had tried to obtain triggers for nuclear weapons.

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Reacting to criticism by U.S. President George Bush to his threat to retaliate against Israel,

Hussein said:

"Did President Bush expect us to talk in another tone... does President Bush think that self-defence is bad, whether it took the form of warning the party who had aggressive intentions and warning him of its consequences..."

Baghdad said it was facing an orchestrated campaign against it in the West and feared Israel was primed for a military strike against Iraq.

In 1981, Israeli jets bombed and destroyed Iraq's nuclear reactor at Osirak.

President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt arrived here Saturday on a previously unannounced visit.

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ANC-Pretoria talks begin May 2

LUSAKA (Agencies) — The African National Congress (ANC) and the South African government announced Saturday they would hold their first discussions on the country's political future in Cape Town next month.

The meeting, originally scheduled for April 11, was postponed by the ANC as a protest against police shooting of protesters in the black township of Sebokeng March 26.

In simultaneous announcements released in Lusaka and Cape Town, the two sides said new talks had been scheduled May 2-4, as a result of a meeting last Thursday between South African President F.W. de Klerk and ANC Deputy President Nelson Mandela.

Mandela was expected to

arrive in Lusaka, the Zambian capital, Sunday for a three-day visit to discuss township violence, the de Klerk meeting and other matters, the ANC said.

Mandela was due to return to South Africa Tuesday, and he is to go to London next week for a rock concert in his honour.

Fifteen more deaths were reported Saturday in the political violence sweeping South Africa. The victims included a baby tied to its mother's back who was shot by police.

Police said the mother, who was wounded, was among a group of people who fired bombs and stoned a police vehicle in Kokosi township, 80 kilometres west of Johannesburg.

Politicians say more blood-

shed may be inevitable before the government and the ANC can begin talks on arranging a peaceful transition from white minority rule to something more acceptable to the black majority.

Before substantive negotiations on a political settlement can start, obstacles include the ANC's demands for the safe return of black exiles, the release of political prisoners and an end to emergency rule and political prosecutions.

Both whites and blacks have accused each other of inciting violence and of procrastinating on peace efforts after de Klerk lifted bans on black opposition groups this year, freed Mandela from jail and said he was ready to discuss power-sharing.

Aoun warns Hrawi against intervention in east Beirut

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Defiant General Michel Aoun, holding out in his battle-scarred presidential palace, Saturday warned troops loyal to Lebanese President Elias Hrawi against intervening in the Lebanon's internal Christian war.

He said mediation had so far failed to find a solution to the nine-week inter-Christian war in which at least 920 people have been killed and huge tracts of the Maronite heartland devastated.

Aoun told Reuters that the Christian Lebanese Forces (LF) militia and his 15,000-strong army had reached a stalemate on the battlefield and neither side could win outright.

"Military action will not determine the final result... we have to give more importance to political achievement," he said.

Aoun triggered the war for the control of the Christian heartland Jan. 31 when he ordered the 10,000-man LF to disarm and disband.

He said he favoured a political solution with the LF but ruled out a pact with the internationally-recognised Hrawi government which is based in west Beirut.

Aoun dismisses fellow-Maronite Hrawi as a Syrian pup-

pet and opposes a pact agreed in Taif, Saudi Arabia, to end 15 years of civil war because it failed to ensure a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon.

Hrawi has said he would meet a

request from LF leader Samir Geagea to send his mainly-Muslim troops, commanded by General Emile Lahoud, to take over barracks captured by the LF from Aoun.

Panel prepares report

RABAT (R) — Arab peace-makers trying to silence Lebanon's guns completed a detailed report Saturday after talks with both the Iraqi and Syrian foreign ministers.

Diplomatic sources said the report, drawn up by the foreign ministers of Algeria, Morocco and Saudi Arabia, took full account of recent changes in and around the capital Beirut.

"We have worked very well," said Algerian Foreign Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali as he left after three days of talks.

The report will now be presented to the heads of state of the three countries — charged by an Arab summit in Casablanca last May with the task of trying to end 15 years of civil war.

Diplomatic sources said Christian militia leader Samir Geagea, who is battling defiant

General Michel Aoun in east Beirut, had sent a letter to the negotiators saying he accepted a peace plan brokered by the three countries.

Aoun refuses to accept the Arab league-backed peace plan.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, whose country backed Aoun in the inter-Christian fighting, reiterated that Iraq was no longer supplying arms or giving other material support to any faction in the conflict, well-informed sources said.

They added that the Arab League's Lebanese committee had asked for an undertaking that Syria would take steps to enable the Lebanese state to exercise its authority in west Beirut as foreseen in the Taif accord.

Poindexter found guilty of all charges

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Former U.S. National Security Adviser John Poindexter was convicted Saturday at his Iran-contra cover-up trial of all five criminal charges against him in the scandal that rocked the last two years of Ronald Reagan's presidency.

The jury delivered the verdict on two counts of obstructing Congress, two counts of lying to Congress and one count of conspiracy.

The former national security adviser is the highest-ranking Reagan administration official to be put on trial in the so-called Iran-contra scandal.

Poindexter, a former admiral, faces up to 25 years in prison and fines of \$1.25 million. U.S. District Court Judge Harold Greene sentenced sentencing for June 11.

Poindexter resigned as national security adviser when the scandal broke in 1986.

The 1985-86 operating involved the secret sale of arms to Iran in hopes of freeing U.S. hostages held in Lebanon and the diversion of profits from the arms sale to Nicaragua's contra rebels when Congress had banned such aid.

Poindexter was the highest-ranking Reagan White House official charged in the scandal and the last major defendant to stand trial in an inquiry stretching back three-and-one-half years.

Star witnesses in the month-long trial were Reagan for the defence and Oliver North, Poindexter's White House aide, who had masterminded Iran-contra operations, for the prosecution.

In nearly eight hours of

videotaped testimony, Reagan bolstered defence arguments that Poindexter believed he was acting at the president's behest in carrying out Iran-contra plans and in concealing the operation from Congress.

But Reagan also said he warned all of his subordinates to stay within the law.

North, convicted last year of cover-up and illegal profit charges, testified that he kept Poindexter informed of his Iran-contra actions. He said his boss told him to handle a congressional inquiry and congratulated him when he lied.

Five lesser participants have been convicted of Iran-contra misdeeds. Best known is Robert McFarlane, who preceded Poindexter as national security adviser and pleaded guilty to misdemeanors related to the cover-up. No one has

served jail time.

He testified that he was reluctant to go to a meeting with members of Congress about the contras because he knew there would be things he could not disclose.

North said he expressed his concerns to Poindexter, who sent his subordinate to the meeting anyway.

North testified that Poindexter told him: "You can handle it" or "You can take care of it."

Once there, North lied repeatedly, telling intelligence committee members he wasn't offering military advice to the rebel force.

North also testified that he watched Poindexter tear up a politically embarrassing presidential document that approved a Nov. 25, 1985 shipment of Hawk missiles to Iran.

Palestinian group to free three hostages very soon

BEIRUT (R) — A radical Palestinian group said Saturday it would free three European hostages very soon after direct contacts with the French government yielded positive results.

"The current discussions between our movement and the parties concerned with the captives have reached positive results," said Walid Khaled, spokesman for the Fateh Revolutionary Council (FRC).

Khaled said the release of Frenchwoman Jacqueline Valente, 31, her Belgian boyfriend Fernand Houtekins, 42, and their baby Sony, who was born in captivity, was imminent. He refused to say when or where they would be freed.

He said four Belgians seized with Valente and Houtekins in November 1987 from a yacht off Israel would not be freed because "the Belgian government did not meet its pledges, especially that of curbing the activity of the Israeli Mossad secret service in Belgium."

Khaled said the four — Houtekins' brother Emmanuel, 44, his wife Godolieve Kets, 39, and their two children, Valerie, 18, and 19-year-old Laurent — were in "very good health" and being provided with regular medical care.

He said Valente, who gave birth twice in captivity, would be freed without only child, born to her and Houtekins about two years ago. He said Valente would explain after her release why one baby only was freed.

The FRC is led by Abu Nidal, one of the world's most wanted guerrilla leaders. Khaled said the decision to free the three was taken in response to the appeal by Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi and following

direct negotiations with the French authorities.

He hailed French President Francois Mitterrand and his government for their "concern about their nationals," saying French authorities had shown willingness to meet their pledges on some issues. He did not elaborate.

Khaled was speaking to Reuters and Visnews international television news agency in an interview at the Palestinian refugee camp of Mar Elias in mainly Muslim West Beirut.

The FRC said Thursday it was holding immediate contacts to arrange the release of hostages, following Qadhafi's appeal to Muslims to adhere to the "noble Islamic values which affirm the honour and humanity of man and the non-taking of innocent hostages."

In December 1988 Qadhafi secured the release in Libya of Valente's daughters, Marie-Laure, seven, and Virginie, six. They were with the others when the Yacht Silco was seized.

The Libyan-financed FRC has said its captives, believed held in Lebanon or Libya, are Jewish spies. Relatives deny this.

Shortly before the interview, Khaled met the Belgian ambassador to Lebanon. He also headed to the Libyan embassy for meetings with officials there.

Abu Nidal, whose real name is Sabri Al Banna, is the reputed mastermind of dozens of raids across the world since 1982.

His organisation, described by the United States as the "world's most dangerous terrorist group,"

was blamed for an attack which injured Israeli Ambassador Shlomo Argov in London in 1982.

Israel used it as a pretext for its invasion of Lebanon later that year to expel Palestinian guerrillas.

Abu Nidal's guerrillas attacked Rome and Vienna airports in 1985, killing 18 people and wounding some 100.

Abu Nidal was based in Libya for several years but diplomats say his relations with Qadhafi became strained last year. His whereabouts are a subject of constant rumour in the Middle East. Several reports have said he is dead.

Khaled said the FRC was using its good offices with pro-Iranian groups to help secure the release of 17 Western hostages believed held by them.

In a statement released later Saturday, Khaled appealed to the captors of two Swiss relief agency workers to free their hostages.

"Our organisation is ready to provide moral and financial guarantees to the captors in order to solve this tragic problem," Khaled said.

The two International Committee of the Red Cross workers, Emmanuel Christen, 33, and Octo Erriguez, 24, were seized on Oct. 6, 1989, by two gunmen in the port city of Sidon, 40 kilometres south of Beirut.

Palestinian sources have linked their abduction to the imprisonment in Switzerland of Lebanese Shi'ite hijacker Hussein Mohammed Hariri, a member of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God).

Khaled said the release of the two Swiss hostages would help improve the "relationship between our people and nation and the Belgian people and government."

Congress looks at 'Israel in the 1990s' Experts see Israeli society moderating in future

By Norma S. Holmes
USIA

WASHINGTON — Israeli public opinion is moderating, and consequently long-range prospects for a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are growing, three recognised experts on Israel recently told a congressional panel.

"Within a decade — perhaps sooner — there will be a new political structure which affords some expression of Palestinian nationalism in the West Bank and Gaza," said Samuel W. Lewis, president of the United States Institute for Peace, a Washington study group.

"I really am very optimistic about the long term," Lewis said on April 4 during a House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee hearing titled "Israel in the 1990s." At the same time, he said, because of the continuing violence, "at present it is more difficult for Arabs and Israelis to contemplate co-existence than it was five years ago."

Lewis, who was U.S. ambassador to Israel from 1977 to 1985, said Rand Corporation study by Graham Fuller on the West Bank and Gaza concludes that the establishment of a Palestinian state is inevitable. The report is widely accepted by experts on the region as a reasonable probability.

Stressing that "the way in which events occur is as important as the events themselves," Lewis added:

"What is important is whether the region adjusts to increasing bitterness and violence or a process grounded in negotiation. That's what we all ought to be

concentrating upon — that is the real question for U.S. policymakers. A peace process of some kind is very important, even in moments of great frustration."

Politically, Lewis said, the large "centre" vote today in Israel is "floating" without real commitment to either political party. It will require a generational change of leadership to change this — and this is unlikely to occur in the near future, he said.

Nevertheless, Lewis said he is optimistic about the prospects of peace "in the very long run." He opined that one of the effects of the influx of Soviet professional talent into the country has been to lift national morale to a level that has not been seen "in decades."

"That national morale being lifted I think is a precondition for a successful peace process," he contended. "A country that feels threatened, with its back against the wall, will never take the steps necessary for a settlement of the Palestinian issue."

The end result of the Soviet emigration surge, combined with a new generational leadership will make Israeli readiness for compromise on the territories a reality within the next three to five years, Lewis said.

"Whether the Palestinian side of the equation and the Arab side can wait that long is a very serious question." If they cannot, Lewis said, "there may be the prospect of another major upsurge of enormous violence before you get to that negotiating mode."

Professor Ian Lustick of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New

Hampshire, an author of several books on Israel, said his studies there over extended periods since 1969 confirm that a new moderation is emerging.

Predicting that there will be a Palestinian state within the decade, Lustick said that "signals are increasingly sent from the United States to Israel that (holding on to the occupied) territories and U.S. goodwill (towards Israel) cannot both be kept."

Lustick said recent polls indicate that 50 per cent of Israeli Jews say that within the next 10-20 years there will be a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. But he also predicted that before the process actually takes place, "A crisis will bring into question Israel's democratic institutions."

Characterising Israel in the 1990s as a nation with "deep divisions and difficult choices," Lustick said that "a political paralysis has afflicted Israel" since the end of the Lebanon War in 1982 over Israel's proper relationship to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. He said two blocs, (Likud and Labour) representing diametrically opposed views have crystallised into an extraordinarily even political split.

The newest and most unpredictable factor in the equation, he said, is the massive flow of Soviet Jewish immigrants. "Approximately 200 a day are now arriving in Israel, with predictions that between 250,000 and one million Soviet Jews will become Israelis as a result of (Soviet leader Mikhail) Gorbachev's political earthquake."

Lustick said that aside from the economic problem of absorption,

internal political problems in the 90s "will get much worse, more brutal, and much more frightening before they get better."

In Israel itself there have been protests from Israeli Arabs and disadvantaged Oriental Jews against subsidising relatively high standards of living for Russian Jews at the expense of Arab villages, development towns, and poor urban neighbourhoods.

But in the long term, Lustick said, the massive shift in demography will result in increased political status for both Israeli Arabs and Soviet emigres, who, he predicted, will meld into the existing major political parties.

There is "no evidence to support the theory that they will all vote for the Likud," as some predict, he said. "As a group, they are professional, very secular, and will urbanise the country."

Turning to Lebanon, Lustick said another hopeful sign in the region is that Syria and Israel may be discovering that cooperation and shared international leadership in Lebanon "may be the best solution for both."

Lustick said the impact of the intifada in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been to "rigidify attitudes." It has made Israelis less ready to risk giving up the territories, while at the same time affording Palestinians with a new sense of identity and purpose.

Politically, he said "the problem lies in the long-standing image of the Arab as a brutal, dangerous neighbour — yet curiosity, public opinion acknowledges that, in the long-term, Israel must accommodate."

Dr. Asher Arian, of the City University of New York, who has taught at Tel Aviv University for the past 25 years and has co-authored a 1988 Jaffee Institute report on the occupied territories, said three key factors determine the chances of any Israeli political party which hopes to form a successful government: Security, prosperity and peace. "The party which can address those needs in the next 10 years is going to lead Israel."

"All parties in Israel would like to achieve peace — the question is price, not objectives," Arian said.

Arian said his studies reveal curious paradoxes in Israeli public opinion. His 1987 and 1988 studies showed increased belief "in the chances of a peace — but also of war." But on long-term questions, he said, "there has been a gradual, relatively stable increase in the percentage of Israelis willing to consider compromise, to return territories, and to agree to an eventual Palestinian state."

Arian also pointed out that if the estimates of 750,000 new immigrants to Israel within the decade are correct, then the voting population may be increased.

"Assuming that immigrants from the Soviet Union will vote as a bloc, however, flies in the face of Israeli experience. The general pattern has been to support existing parties."

On the question of changing generational leadership, Arian said it is "not likely" a new generation of leaders will emerge. "There is a lot of fresh blood, but the system will not let them come out."

Former aide says Abu Nidal had 300 of his men murdered

NEW YORK (R) — A former top aide says Palestinian radical leader Abu Nidal is a psychopathic killer who has had 300 of his men murdered, a U.S. television network has reported.

"He is a person with a sick mind. He is like a snake that bites and disappears... a schizophrenic who will kill comrades, put them in a hole and put flowers on top," the former aide, Abu Bakr, said in an interview with CBS.

Abu Nidal is leader of the Fateh Revolutionary Council (FRC), a radical Palestinian group. The United States says that among other things, he was responsible for the Christmas 1985 attacks on the Rome and Vienna airports that left 18 people dead and more than 100 injured.

It says he has received considerable financing from Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.

CBS said Abu Bakr broke with Abu Nidal this winter when Abu Nidal began killing his own men, even family members.

"He killed his wife's brother and the man's son. He killed people who'd worked with him for 10 years. He confessed himself he had killed 300 of them," Abu Bakr said.

CBS said Abu Bakr admitted helping to plan and carry out the attack at the Rome and Vienna airports and other guerrilla actions, including the attack on tourists aboard a ferry in Athens Harbour in July 1988.

The network said that concern about the carnage led to a split within the Abu Nidal organisation.

tion that led to the killings.

CBS said the reports that Qadhafi has arrested Abu Nidal were untrue and it quoted Abu Bakr as saying that he is still on the loose and is known only from a grainy, 20-year-old photograph.

"It is easy for him to move around. His face is not known. He has false passports. Now he could be in Denmark, Poland, anywhere," Abu Bakr said.

The network quoted Abu Bakr as saying Abu Nidal is getting ready to strike again.

Abu Bakr said he has a war chest of 200 million in Swiss banks, a private army in Lebanon and dozens of agents under his command in Europe.

"We have an Arab proverb, a wolf when injured is more vicious," Abu Bakr said.

Turkish troops kill Kurdish rebel in southeast; four bombs explode

ISTANBUL (Agencies) — Turkish troops killed a separatist Kurdish rebel Saturday in a clash near the southern town of Hakkari.

Officials said one guerrilla was captured after the fighting in the village of Ikiyaka near the Iraqi border.

Thirteen children and six women were killed in Ikiyaka late last year in an attack by the Marxist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK).

Since 1984 the PKK has been waging a violent campaign for autonomy for Turkey's estimated 10 million Kurds, whom Ankara does not recognise as a minority. Nearly 2,000 people have died. Security forces seized 25

Kalashnikov rifles in Hakkari Friday while searching a minibus. Officials said the weapons were smuggled into Turkey and a possible link with the PKK was being investigated.

Hayri Kozakcioglu, governor of the southeast region, told Reuters the PKK had started combining forces with other extremist groups in the region.

Three small bombs exploded in Istanbul and one in Ankara late Friday, causing damage but no injuries. A man claiming to speak for the banned Dev-Sol (revolutionary left) group claimed responsibility in a telephone call to Güneş newspaper.

The caller claimed the bombs were placed to protest at govern-

ment policy towards Kurds.

In Istanbul bombs went off in front of two police stations in the central Besiktas and Bakirkoy districts and outside an office building in the Gumussuyu business area.

In a separate development, the International Press Institute (IPI) said Friday it has protested to the Turkish government over censorship, the confiscation of thousands of newspapers and the storming of printing presses.

Peter Galliner, the institute's director, said he sent a message to Turkish President Turgut Ozal Thursday, expressing concern about censorship of the Istanbul daily newspaper, Sabah by the state security court Wednesday.

Sudan to introduce democratic system

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's military government plans to introduce a new legislative system that will be more democratic than the current Libyan-style committee lawmaking process, a senior officer said Saturday.

The newspaper Al Sudan Al Hadith quoted Brigadier Osman Ahmad Al Hassan, member of the ruling 15-officer junta, as saying the system will be "a comprehensive one, embracing all sectors."

He did not specify how the new system will work but said it "will seek to meet the aspirations of the people in freedom and democracy... more global and super-

ior" to People's Committees now in operation.

Li-Gen. Omar Hassan Al Bashir's military government took power in a coup last June 30 and disbanded political parties and trade unions. The junta exercised its authority through a cabinet of officers and civilians.

Several months ago, Bashir introduced People's Committees in neighbourhoods to administer shops and prevent black marketing.

He took as his model Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's Jamahiriya system, which Qadhafi contends is the purest form of democracy because it

eliminates elected representatives as middlemen in the exercise of power.

Later, after Bashir signed an "integration declaration" with Qadhafi aiming to unify the two countries in four years, he used the Sudanese committees to ratify the document. No other legislative process existed in the country.

Hassan did not say when the new system is to be implemented. But he said the ruling military council will meet soon to review "the best means through which the desired formula for the new political system can be reached."

Afghan general, several others killed in rebel 'surrender' plot

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Guerrillas opened fire as more than 10,000 other insurgents surrendered to the Afghan government in a ceremony on the Herat plains, killing more than a dozen people, Radio Kabul reported.

Jamiat-i-Islami, considered the most militarily efficient of the seven Pakistan-based Afghan guerrilla groups, claimed the surrender was planned five months ago to trap government forces.

An Afghan army general, a deputy security minister, nine guerrillas and several civilians died in the close-range battle that erupted during the surrender ceremony, Radio Kabul said.

Diplomats based in Kabul, the capital, and foreign journalists had been flown in for the ceremony and became witnesses to the slaughter, the radio said.

"A small group of extremists attacked the welcome ceremony with heavy fire. In the resulting battle between Afghan troops and the extremists, numerous people were martyred," said the radio, monitored in Islamabad.

The guerrillas killed Lt.-Gen. Jalal Razaminada, who is also a

deputy security minister, and injured Herat Provincial Governor Fazle Haq Khaliq as they embraced guerrilla commanders who gave up their weapons and promised to join President Najibullah's "national reconciliation policy."

A second general died later on a military plane to Kabul, it said. His identity was not immediately released.

"National reconciliation" is a term used by the government for guerrilla groups agreeing to switch sides and either stop fighting or help the government. Najibullah has claimed tens of thousands of guerrillas have joined "national reconciliation" in the past year.

But guerrilla sources in the southeast Pakistani city of Quetta said the attack was first planned five months ago.

According to the sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, the guerrillas slowly began infiltrating the area in November and then sent word that they wanted to surrender.

The guerrillas are trying to overthrow the government that

seized power in the 1978 coup that installed Marxist rule. The guerrillas are backed by the United States and are based in Pakistan.

According to Kabul Radio, 2,200 armed guerrillas and some 8,000 unarmed rebels gathered on the plains about 45 kilometres from the city of Herat for the surrender ceremony.

But instead of surrendering their weapons, the guerrillas turned them on government officials and army troops, the guerrilla sources said.

The guerrillas — reportedly armed with weapons ranging from sidearms to recoilless cannons, missiles and rocket launchers — fired the first shot as the governor embraced an unidentified rebel commander dressed in a white robe and turban, according to Western diplomats and guerrilla leaders in Pakistan.

The diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, also said they had reports that as many as five Afghan generals were killed or wounded in the 15-minute gunbattle and in hand-to-hand combat with knives and pistols.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS BRIEFS

Algeria backs corruption inquiry

ALGIERS (R) — The Algerian government said Saturday it wanted a parliamentary inquiry into charges by an ex-prime minister that former officials robbed the country of \$26 billion. Abdul Hamid Brahimi, prime minister from 1984 to 1988, accused unnamed former officials last month of taking commissions and bribes on foreign contracts. He said total losses were \$2 billion more than the country's current foreign debt of \$24 billion. A statement published in Saturday newspapers said the government was determined to use all legal means to investigate. "The government supports without reserve the creation of a commission of inquiry in the National Assembly, will give it full support and put at its disposal all information allowing it to reach a conclusion," the statement said. The charges are the most serious of their kind ever made by a senior public official. Ordinary Algerians often voice suspicion that officials of the ruling National Liberation Front have been involved in high-level corruption.

Iraqi charged in assassination plot

SACRAMENTO, California (R) — U.S. prosecutors have accused an Iraqi national of participating in a plot to kill two opponents of the Iraq government living in the United States. David Levi, U.S. prosecutor for the eastern district of California, said a grand jury had indicted Andri Khoshaba, 47, on two counts of interstate travel related to a murder-for-hire scheme. Khoshaba, a former driver for the Iraqi mission to the United Nations in New York, has lived for the past two years in Modesto, California, Levi said. The grand jury indictment did not identify the two targets of the murder plot. Khoshaba has not been arrested and is considered a fugitive. A warrant was issued for his arrest, prosecutors said. Levi said Khoshaba travelled twice in February from Modesto, in central California, to New York to discuss the plot. "The discussions included a promise to pay Khoshaba \$50,000 for his role in assassinating two opponents of the Iraqi government here in the United States," Levi said. Khoshaba was detained briefly in February but then released, Levi said.

Rabta plant fire was a fake — U.S. aides

WASHINGTON (AP) — Satellite photographs show that the burn marks believed to have been left by a fire at a Libyan chemical plant were painted on, and U.S. authorities now believe the incident was a hoax, the Washington Post reported in Saturday editions. "It clearly was an attempt at deception," an unidentified senior intelligence official told the newspaper. "It's not particularly well done." The United States accused Libya of producing poison gas at the plant. The Libyans, who said the plant produced medicine, accused the United States and other countries of being responsible for setting it on fire in early March. By the end of last month, U.S. officials were saying that the damage at the plant was not as extensive as previously believed. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said then that the possibility of a fake fire could not be ruled out.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77311-19	
PROGRAMME ONE	
15:30	Koran
15:40	Programme review
15:45	Children programme
17:10	Football
18:00	News summary in Arabic
18:05	Local programme
18:20	Cultural programme
19:00	Local programme
19:40	Programme review
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Arabic series
21:30	Programme review
21:40	Local programme
22:40	Varities programme
23:00	News summary in Arabic
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Des Chiffres et de Lettres
18:15	L'école de l'ans
19:00	News in French
19:15	Aujourd'hui en France
19:30	News in Hebrew
19:45	Varities programme
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Who's the Boss?
21:10	The World of Puppetry
22:00	News in English
22:20	Agatha Christie's Poirot
PRAYER TIMES	
03:52	Fajr
05:12	Sunrise (Duba)

11:37	Dhuhr
15:12	'Asr
18:03	Maghreb
19:23	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedieh, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Sallé Church Tel. 661757	
Teremanna Church Tel. 623666	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 633441	
Anglican Church Tel. 625383. Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 77261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Aumam International Church Tel. 685326	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811285	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 815817 and 654932	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	

It will be fair and windy with be easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Amman	Min./max. temp. 6/20
Aqaba	15/29
Deserts	6/23
Jordan Valley	10/27
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 18, Aqaba 28. Humidity readings: Amman 36 per cent, Aqaba 18 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Mohammad Al Sawwa	731429
Dr. Abdul Aziz Al Khawaja	791954
Dr. Khalil Abdul Qader	795392
Dr. Hisham Kusan	790236
First pharmacy	622320
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asana pharmacy	637055
Narouli pharmacy	636672
Al Salan pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeizal pharmacy	637460

ERBID:	
Dr. Ziad Al A'raj	(—)
Al Shurra pharmacy	(985238)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Abdul Latif Sharbini	(—)
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	630800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	
(directory assistance)	121
Operator Calls	070230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repair	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	665101
Jordan Television	773111

Pakistan supports Jordan's stand

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of Pakistan's Upper House of Parliament Wasim Sajjad said Saturday that his country supports Jordan's endeavours to find a just and lasting solution to the Middle East problem in accordance with U.N. Security Council resolution and the return of Arab land occupied since 1967.

"Pakistan is concerned over the dangerous situation in the region which has been aggravated with the Soviet Jewish immigration into Palestine," the Pakistani official said at a meeting with speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Al Lawzi.

"This emigration is not only illegal and immoral but a dangerous thing that should prompt world public opinion to exercise pressure on all those concerned parties to stop it," Sajjad said at the meeting attended by a number of House members and Pakistan's ambassador to Jordan.

Pakistan said Sajjad expresses support for Jordan's efforts to convene an international peace conference to find a solution to the Palestinian problem.

At the outset of the meeting Lawzi spoke of Israel's continued threats to Jordan and the Arab and Islamic world and its actions that pose a threat to Islamic shrines including the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

"Israel's ambitions encompass the Islamic world including Pakistan which was object to a hostile campaign for its desire to develop its technological, economic and military power," Lawzi said.

"Israel is now planning to absorb a hundreds of thousands of Jews from Eastern Europe to live on Arab land in Palestine and in Jerusalem, a step which constitutes a grave danger to the Arab Nation," Lawzi pointed out.

He called on Pakistan to play a leading role within the Islamic group to help establish peace in the Gulf region.

He said Pakistan can influence Iran into accepting a lasting peace that should prevail instead of the present no peace no war situation.

Sajjad extended an invitation to Lawzi to visit Pakistan. A date has yet to be fixed.

Sajjad Saturday visited the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and was briefed by its president Dr. Hani Mulk on the RSS's programmes and services.

One of the RSS's programmes, Mulk said, is a two-year maintenance of bio-medical electronic equipment in Jordan's hospitals.

Sajjad watched a documentary film featuring the RSS's development and activities.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday received at the Royal Court speaker of the Pakistani Upper House of Parliament Wasim Sajjad and the accompanying delegation. Prince Hassan and Sajjad reviewed in the meeting issues of common interest to both countries and the latest developments in the Arab, Islamic and international arenas. The meeting was attended by Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi and the Pakistani ambassador to Amman.

Cyprus condemns Jewish immigration

NICOSIA (Petra) — Cypriot President George Vasilou Saturday described Soviet Jewish immigration to Palestine as further complicating the Middle East problem because this would undermine the concept of exchanging land for peace.

The president said that Greece and the rest of the European Community have realised the dangers inherent in the immigration which is bound to aggravate the Middle East situation.

"Israel has thus responded to overtures for peace on the part of the Palestine Liberation Organisation by opting for further intransigence and total rejection of a peaceful settlement," the president said in a statement at a meeting with the Jordanian delegation to the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) meeting here.

Vasilou said that the immigration should end so as to help find a solution for the problem.

The president said that His Majesty King Hussein enjoys respect and esteem among the Cypriot people for his wisdom and his relentless efforts to establish a just peace in the Middle East region.

He said that his visit to Jordan towards the end of April at the King's invitation will serve as an incentive for bolstering bilateral ties.

For his part, the Jordanian delegation's leader Suleiman Arar spoke in detail about the dangers inherent in the Jewish immigration into Palestine, describing it as a major threat to peace.

"This migration process is part of an all out plot to force the Palestinians to leave their homeland which is to be settled by Jews from the Soviet Union," Arar said.

Arar, who is also speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, said Jordan fears that the migration would increase tension and endanger world peace.

Referring to the Cypriot problem, Arar voiced Jordan's hope that the two sides in the conflict will finally find a way towards lasting peace with the help of peace loving nations.

Arar and his parliamentary delegation are expected to return to Amman Saturday evening following their participation in the IPU meetings.

CAEU decries campaign against Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman-based Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) Saturday issued a statement urging Arab countries to join their ranks in the face of the hostile campaign directed against Iraq.

The statement was issued by CAEU's Secretary-General Hassan Ibrahim who said that the present campaign against Iraq is designed to pave the ground for an attack on the Arab country.

"The Israeli enemy and the other forces behind Zionism and Israel's aggression, especially the United States are seeking to maintain Israel's military superiority over all the Arab military forces," Ibrahim said.

Referring to Israel's 1981 raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, Ibrahim said that it was designed to abort the Arab countries attempt to acquire scientific and technological skill and to keep the Arab World backward and underdeveloped and at the mercy of Israel and the west.

Federation to tackle corruption

AMMAN (Petra) — The Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce is currently preparing the ground for a general conference in Jordan to deal with the question of economic crimes in response to a call by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, according to federation Chairman Mohammad Asfour.

"The projected conference aims at spreading awareness among the public about economic crimes and at enriching the experience of Jordanian businessmen about this important issue," Asfour said Saturday.

"Jordan does not suffer from this kind of crimes, but it is liable to be affected by it in the absence of a general awareness and if special laws and rules to control such crimes do not exist," Asfour said in the weekly television programme "Encounter" transmitted on channel two.

"The federation plays an active role in stimulating the national economy and in building bridges between the private and the public sectors in Jordan," Asfour said when asked on the federation's activities in the Kingdom.

He said that the federation is represented in several government-appointed committees including one on supply and another on economy and trade.

"The federation is also active in its drive to spread awareness among Jordanian businessmen about the dimensions of the economic readjustment programme which was agreed on with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the businessmen have now started to adapt to the national economic crisis with a view to helping the country overcome its consequences," Asfour added.

Jordan, Asfour said, currently faces a host of problems, the most important of which is soaring prices, but it is hoped that through joint cooperation with the government the federation will help find solutions.

"The Jordanian businessmen and merchants are citizens of this country and are willing to contribute towards ending the crisis, but the government, for its part, has to provide the businessmen in the private sector with incentives that can give assurances to investors," Asfour said.

Mohammad Asfour.

country and are willing to contribute towards ending the crisis, but the government, for its part, has to provide the businessmen in the private sector with incentives that can give assurances to investors," Asfour said.

"In addition, the government ought to pass clear and unequivocal laws on taxes, and these laws should not come about in reaction to certain developments and should not be changed when officials are changed because such confusion will upset investors' plans and discourage them from embarking on projects in the Kingdom," Asfour added.

In reply to a question about arbitration and an arbitration conference which was held last year in Amman, Asfour said that arbitration has become a must in view of the numerous problems that arose in the past few years in trade dealings between European countries and the Arab World.

The past decade witnessed an economic boom in the Middle East and subsequent trade contracts between Arabs and Europeans and various investments, led to disputes that could only be settled through arbitration, Asfour said.

Referring to Jordan's external debts, Asfour said the debts accumulated as a result of Jordan's planning the implementation of numerous projects in a relatively short period of time.

Most of the funds were spent on the laying of infrastructure, especially in transport and telecommunications.

He said that although these projects were essential, there should have been further control on public spending.



Vintage aircraft crews Saturday pose for a group photo in Amman. The men, women and their magnificent machines are expected to fly to Saudi Arabia today.

Vintage planes off to S. Arabia

AMMAN (J.T.) — Vintage aircraft that have been on a three-day visit to Jordan, the sixth stop along the air rally route from England to Australia are now awaiting permit to cross into Saudi Arabia, a trip expected to start Sunday.

The 17 aircraft who first stopped at Aqaba before moving on to Amman are manned by 40-member crew from the United States, the United Kingdom, Zimbabwe and Australia.

The crew have visited Amman and the ancient Nabatean city of Petra in the south in the course of a programme prepared by the Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel in Amman where the group is staying.

The group's spokesman Lang

Kidby, from Australia, addressed a press conference at the hotel Saturday expressing delight at being in Jordan and voicing the group's appreciation for the facilities given them to land and tour the archaeological and tourist sites.

Kidby said that the rally aims at encouraging the hobby of flying.

"The multi-national participants are competing for enjoyment and the challenge as well as the once-in-a-lifetime involvement in such a unique event," said Kidby at the press conference.

Departing from White Waltham airfield in England, March 25, the vintage aircraft will make 31 stops on the route which goes

through Asia down to Australia, a route they plan to cover in six weeks, ending later this month.

The flight is to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the first single-engine light aircraft flight from England to Australia by Parer and Macintosh, pilots of pre-1950 planes, according to Kidby.

Kidby said that several pilots were in their 70s and they included Marion Jayne, one of the world's most successful women air racers.

Upon their arrival in Aqaba, Wednesday the crew members were welcomed by Her Majesty Queen Noor and local officials who later accompanied them on a visit to tourist and archaeological sites.

Bridge closing timetable announced

AMMAN (Petra) — The following timetable was issued by the Public Security Department (PSD) concerning travel to and from the occupied West Bank over the coming two months across the King Hussein and Prince Mohammad bridges:

Day	Date	Bridge timings
Monday	9.4.90	Open until 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday	10.4.90	Closed.
Sunday	15.4.90	Open until 10 a.m.
Monday	16.4.90	Closed
Sunday	29.4.90	Open until 10 a.m.

Monday	30.4.90	Closed
Tuesday	29.5.90	Open until 10 a.m.
Wednesday	30.5.90	Closed
Thursday	19.9.90	Open until 10 a.m.
Friday	20.9.90	Closed
Saturday	21.9.90	Closed.

On Monday April 9 only 200 passengers will be allowed to cross to the West Bank on each of the two bridges after which the bridges will be closed.

On Tuesday, April 10, both bridges will be closed and will reopen Wednesday. Normally bridges are open through office hours starting from 7 a.m.

Income generating projects planned for Zarqa women

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein will inaugurate Tuesday a scheme that will enable women in the Zarqa governorate to reap the fruits of a productive home-based small industry.

The Zarki Light Footwear Workshop in Zarqa is implemented by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's Women and Development Programme (WDP) in cooperation with the Housewives Society, an affiliate of the General Federation of Jordanian Women in Zarqa governorate.

In its experimental first stage, the project will provide job opportunities for 16 women of limited-income or no income at all, who will be working in the shop itself, in addition to those engaged in management and marketing. The number can be multiplied as work in the shop expands with the introduction of new production lines. All women will be working part-or full-time, at home or in the workshop.

The overall objective of the scheme is to integrate women into the socio-economic development of the country and to boost the benefits they draw from the process.

In particular, the scheme seeks to: — identify potential female leaders and administrative cadres and train them in the management of

viable, productive enterprises. — transform social work in Jordan from a charitable to a viable business-oriented endeavour.

— provide the local market with high-quality products that would take the place of imports.

— demonstrate the fruitful effectiveness of cooperation among local, national and international organisations in implementing productive schemes.

During her visit, Queen Noor will inspect the various sections of the workshop and listen to briefings by Salwa Masri, director of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's Women and Development Programme, and Badi'a Jou'aneh, president of the Housewives Society in Zarqa.

Queen Noor will also visit the Jordan Tannery, the workshop's major supplier of leather.

The overall objective of the Women and Development Programme is to devise effective systems and identify practical interventions to support fuller integration, participation, and representation of Jordanian women in national socio-economic development.

The United Nations Population Fund finances all productive schemes initiated by the Women and Development Programme, which include: — bee-keeping and honey production in Karak governorate,

— planting medicinal herbs in Irbid governorate, — rabbit production in Balqa governorate,

— ready-to-wear garments in Mafrqa governorate,

— dolls in traditional costumes in Amman,

— informational and educational materials,

— business counselling for women entrepreneurs in small enterprises.

Planning for the scheme started early in 1989 under the supervision of a technical committee which had been entrusted with the tasks of research, organisation and monitoring of the scheme.

Implementation of the scheme started in January 1990, when installation of the machines was completed and attractive, appropriately-priced cloth and leather house shoes and moccasins were produced.

The Noor Al Hussein Foundation's Women and Development programme has provided the required support for training the supervisor and the workers and for bringing in an expert from Cyprus, who supervised the installation of the machines, selection of the patterns and designs, determining the requirements, and training the technical supervisor in producing attractive designs.

Jordan will benefit from united Europe — EC envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — The unity of Europe, expected in 1992, is bound to have its beneficial effects on Jordan and its economy as prices of most Jordan's imports from the European Community (EC) will be reduced by six per cent according to initial studies, EC head of delegation in Amman Christian Falkowski announced Saturday.

"After 1993 production cost of most European industrial products will be reduced in view of the expected expansion in industry and the increased dependence on technology for increasing production to cover the needs of all the EC countries which will be grouped into a single market, one of the major markets of the world," Falkowski said.

"Increased production, together with the affiliated process to trade, like insurance and freight, are all expected to be reduced in such a market which will have a greater power of competition and rivalry in terms of prices and quality of products," Falkowsky added.

Referring to the current EC-Jordan cooperation, he said that it will be maintained and boosted under a United Europe.

"The present privileges given to Jordan will remain in force and Jordan's industrial exports to any EC country will be exempted from all duty and other customs barriers, and will be treated on the same level as products manufactured in the European Community," Falkowski pointed out.

"Indeed Jordan will have a greater opportunity to export goods to a united Europe after 1993," Falkowski said.

The EC delegates said that Europe is keen on developing its ties with Jordan in all possible fields, and will not spare any effort to provide facilities to the Kingdom to contribute towards stronger relations specially in the fields of industry, agriculture and investments, exploration of mineral resources and trade, as well as scientific and technological cooperation and the protection of the environment.

Falkowski said that the EC will

continue to provide financial assistance to Jordan in implementation of its protocols signed with the Kingdom.

The EC delegate also welcomed any Jordanian initiative to stimulate tourism between EC states and Jordan, and said all possible facilities would be offered to the Kingdom through travel and tourist offices in Europe.

"The EC is willing to study any proposal for cooperation between the two sides in these fields," Falkowski said.

He said that the EC is at present linked through economic agreements with Jordan, Egypt and North Yemen but not with the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) countries as a whole group.

According to informed sources here, the Jordanian government has now prepared a draft agreement which is designed to boost cooperation with EC countries and pave the way for increasing Jordan's exports to Europe.

Minister pursues employment campaign

ZARQA (J.T.) — Minister of Labour Ouseim Obaidat Saturday made an inspection tour of Zarqa's industrial businesses and announced that he was seeking to find jobs for the unemployed Jordanians.

"The Ministry of Labour is concerned with following up and solving labour disputes in Jordan and also with finding work for the job seekers in line with the government's pledge to deal with the problem of unemployment," Obaidat said during the tour.

The minister visited the white cement factory in the Zarqa governorate and met with the plant's managing director and the workers union to discuss labour disputes and the workers current strike for better pay conditions.

According to a statement later, both sides agreed that no pay increases would be made this year in view of the difficult economic conditions in Jordan and the lack of sufficient funds. But they both stressed the need of total commitment to work and no return to strikes.

Obaidat later visited the labour department here and was briefed on labour-related issues.

The minister urged department officials to follow up the matter of finding work for Jordanians at various factories and organisations.

In a statement published Saturday, the minister of labour said that a draft law on national development and employment fund for 1990 had been approved, and it will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for final endorsement.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

JNRCS takes part in international camp

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) will take part in the works of the international camp for the youth of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to start in West Germany Sunday. The 21-day camp, organised by the German Red Cross Society, aims at stressing the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement in spreading awareness of and respect to the international humanitarian laws and the role of the youth in development. The Jordanian delegation to the camp will present a report on the activities of the JNRCS.

Mu'ab budget approved

KARAK (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Karim Al Dughmli Saturday approved Mu'ab municipality budget for the current year. Of the JD 140,000-budget, JD 35,000 were allocated for constructing a new building for the municipality, JD 30,000 for opening and asphalted roads and JD 22,000 for the purchase of equipment and maintenance works.

Exhibition opens at Yarmouk

IRBID (Petra) — An exhibition of paintings by Khalil Al Kofahi opened Saturday at the Yarmouk University. The five-day exhibition, entitled "The natural scenes in the Jordanian environment" includes 40 paintings depicting the environment in the city, the countryside and the desert.

Yarmouk to attend Budapest conference

IRBID (Petra) — Yarmouk University will participate in the annual conference of the European Accountancy Committee to start in Budapest April 18. Representing the university in the three-day conference will be Dr. Sayel Ramadan. Ramadan said that he will present a paper entitled "Accountancy for undergraduate students" in which he reviews the Yarmouk's experience in teaching accountancy.

Summer registration at JUST begins

RAMTHA (Petra) — Registration for the summer course at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) started Saturday and will continue until April 14. The summer course at the university will start June 19.

CSCC opens new branch

KARAK (Petra) — The Civil Servants Consumer Corporation has opened a new branch in south Mazar, according to the corporation's Managing Director Jamil Farahneh. He said the corporation is currently considering proposals for opening new branches in various parts of the country, especially in the south Jordan Valley.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Ahmad Nawash at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "The Productive Families" displaying embroidery, ceramics, woolen clothes and foodstuffs at Al Qadisiyya Community College.
- ★ The Islamic book exhibition which includes books on Islam, literature, psychology, sociology, education, philosophy, law and history at Yarmouk University.
- ★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Khalil Al Kofahi at the Yarmouk University.

THEATRE

- ★ Arabic children's play entitled "Tales from My Grandmother's Chest" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 10:00 a.m.

FILM

- ★ Feature film entitled "An American in Paris" at the American Centre — 3:00 p.m.

Jordan Times

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IPU condemns settlements

THE RECENT theft of a mosaic floor from Qasr Al Hallabat that dates back to the second century A.D. brings to the fore a very serious assault on the country's antiquities that also dates back several decades. There is fear that the theft of the mosaic floor from the desert castle is only the tip of an iceberg that has yet to be fully exposed. The trade in Jordanian antiquities has flourished over the past years, albeit on a silent scale, and escaped public attention and scrutiny. This time around, it was the size of the loot, some 30 square-metres, that drew the attention and concern of the country. The countless smaller pieces of Jordan's treasures that were systematically robbed have yet to receive the kind of scrutiny that they rightfully deserve. Part of the problem lies in the fact that antiquities in Jordan that belong to several civilisations and ages are abundant and the country was slow in developing the kind of cultural appreciation for its heritage that would be necessary for their protection. The laissez faire attitude developed and nurtured throughout the years towards Jordan's historic treasures grew out of this sense of indifference that took these antiquities for granted.

While there is a body of legislation already in Jordan's law books that proscribes any misuse of the country's antiquities, there is no parallel public awareness of the significance of these antiquities that Jordanians inherited from past generations. In conjunction with any plan to introduce more biting legislation on the protection of antiquities, there is also an equally pressing task of arousing public concern and knowledge about the implications of this continued rape of Jordan's historic and cultural heritage by engaging the mass media in all its forms for this purpose. More often than not, foreign tourists to this country know more and appreciate more Jordan's antiquities than the people of the country. As long as the public is not part of the process to safeguard Jordan's historic sites and treasures from theft or abuse, any concerted effort to put an end to the continuing theft of these antiquities would be in vain. Part and parcel of this process of increasing public support for this suggested campaign is to call on all those who filled their homes with Jordan's antiquities to return them to the authorities or register them with the Department of Antiquities. Unfortunately the number of Jordanian and foreign homes that contain Jordanian museum pieces are just too many, and a serious effort must be made to retrieve them in the most expeditious manner. As for smuggled pieces and pieces that are in the pipeline for smuggling, additional legislation should be enacted with a view to incriminate all those who are or were part of this great larceny. It should not be hard to gather evidence on all who played an overt or a covert role in this ongoing conspiracy, and the creation of an ad hoc panel on this subject would be very much in order.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

In an editorial Saturday Al Ra'i Arabic daily expressed hoped that Europe would understand the Arab World's position, and maintain its efforts for peace in the Middle East. The paper said that Iraq's acquisition of chemical weapons in reply to Israel's constant threats, and in view of the fact that Israel possesses nuclear weapons threatening the Arab countries and refusing to allow an international inspection of its nuclear facilities. Over the past few days, Israel has been very active in Europe, trying to enlist the European Community's condemnation of Iraq's firm stand and readiness to retaliate in the event of an attack on its territory, said the paper. It said that the Arabs hope that the Europeans would not be taken in by the hysterical outcries raised by the Zionists who have fabricated allegations against Iraq, accusing it of threatening the security of Israel. It is hoped that the Europeans will remain convinced that it is Israel, which is refusing the establishment of a lasting and just peace, and it is Israel which is harbouring aggressive intentions against the Arabs and not vice versa, the paper added.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily on Saturday appeals to all Arabs to exert whatever efforts they can to bring about a reconciliation between Iraq and Syria in the face of the common threat that comes from Israel. Abdul Rahim Omar says that Syria has always sought to achieve military parity with the Israeli enemy, and the chance is now here to achieve that goal. Combining the forces of Syria and Iraq and true solidarity between Baghdad and Damascus are bound to bring about the aspired objective, says the writer. The Iraqis are bitter specially as Syria had taken a hostile stand during the Iraq-Iran conflict, and they now hope that the Syrians will change their stand and come to the aid of Iraq in the event of an Israeli aggression, the writer notes. He says that should Israel succeed in launching a destructive blow on Iraq's industrial and scientific installations, the whole Arab Nation, and Syria in particular will be weakened being the closest to Iraq. The writer points out that Israel has been in the practice of attacking Arab countries individually; and it is time for all Arabs to stand by each and every threatened Arab state.

Sawt Al Shaab daily on Saturday warned of the continued influx of Jews from Eastern Europe into Palestine and said that the Jews of the Soviet Union number around two million and they all are expected to come to the occupied Arab lands one day. The paper said that Eastern Europe also has Jews who wish to emigrate, and since Palestine is the only place open for their migration they are also bound to end up there in the future. The paper said that the emigration of Jews to Palestine started immediately after the Bush-Gorbachev summit and the conspiracy has been growing and intensifying ever since. At the same time Israel has been amassing a formidable nuclear arsenal over the years to protect its expansionist moves backed by unlimited support from the West, the paper added.

Sunday Economic Pulse

Floating brought interest down not up

THE FLOATING interest rate on the dinar was a step that many called for since the early eighties. The Central Bank however was at the time fond of regulations. It used to dictate interest rates by decrees. In mid 1988, CBJ finally discovered the virtues of allowing market forces influence interest rates, and allowing interest rates to respond to changing the floating system was formally legalised in the CBJ law.

Those who always resisted interest floating foresaw extremely high rates resulting and feared this would kill investments. They could not believe that floating could mean higher or lower rates as the

situation may call for. After two years of effective floating, and two months of formal floating, we witness a drop in the interest rate. The interest on interbank deposits declined to the all-time low of six per cent last week. It is even lower than the Central Bank's rediscount rate, the only rate that is determined by management. It is true that the management of some commercial banks advised their customers of their intention to raise interest on their credit facilities, but, they simply believed that, under floating, there is only one direction for interest rate, up. Now those managers are

reconsidering their position, because they found themselves losing their best customers to other banks whose managers were able to understand the rules of the game and knew how to price their services and funds properly. Interest rates on deposits, which rose slightly during the past two years, have now posed for decline. The reason is that the banks are too liquid, and that good borrowers are in short supply. On the face of it, the economic situation may call for higher interest rate on the dinar, due to lower exchange rate of the currency and higher inflation. If interest rates were

going up, we would have understood that and seen it as normal. However, the decline was mainly caused by a sudden and perhaps temporary abundance of extra liquidity. Banks used to dump their cash surpluses on Petra Bank, which welcomed the funds that made up for its shortage of liquidity. Petra Bank used to pay over ten per cent on interbank deposits; lazy managers of commercial banks did not need to worry about investments and the attraction of potential borrowers. When Petra Bank's bubble burst, those lazy, fearful banks hastened to withdraw their deposits from Petra, forcing the Central Bank to come in and

fill the gap by injecting fresh funds into Petra to keep it afloat. The banks found themselves with lots of extra funds that no other banks were willing to take. Finding new borrowers could not happen overnight. It was only natural for interest rates to drop. There is nothing that prevents interest rates from rebounding up as soon as this transitional period is over. What is important is that the floating system allowed prices to respond to the new situation. The lower rates will create new demand on funds and consequently encourage investments and maintain the

badly needed equilibrium between supply and demand. Market signals are the cheapest and most efficient determinant of prices. Those who thought they knew better went broke, and got a hard lesson. Of course many voices may still try to appeal against floating interest rates because it was advocated by the IMF. They think that reference will guarantee them a patriotic stand and secure mobilisation of uniformed public opinion. Floating interest rate was strongly and repeatedly advocated in this column since 1983, long before Jordan called on the IMF for help and advice.



Papandreou seeks political comeback

By Stephen Weeks
Reuters

ATHENS — Less than a year ago Andreas Papandreou was swept from office in an election defeat after a series of scandals that led many to declare his career was ruined. But today the former Greek prime minister is back in the political mainstream, running hard in a general election on Sunday and telling voters his Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasek) will regain its place as the largest party. Latest opinion polls put it in second place after the conservative New Democracy Party.

Greece's first Socialist prime minister, who dominated politics from the time of his landslide victory in 1981 until he was defeated in national elections last June, was at that time vilified and ridiculed daily in almost every newspaper.

An extramarital affair with Dimitra Liani, an airline stewardess half his age, kept political satirists busy. Pasok was rocked by a series of

financial and political scandals which drove many of the party faithful to resign in disgust or disgrace.

The voters handed him such a crushing defeat that some commentators said a decade of conservative rule was at hand.

So far they have been wrong. No party won an absolute majority in the 300-seat parliament in June, or in a November vote. Since Papandreou's defeat Greece has been ruled by weak coalitions.

A third election on Sunday will try to resolve an economic and political crisis paralysing the country but so far opinion polls indicate that yet again there will be no outright winner.

Latest polls give New Democracy 44.4 per cent, compared to 46.2 per cent and 148 seats in November. Pasok has 38.2 per cent, compared to 40.7 per cent and 128 seats and the Communists 10 per cent, compared to 10.9 and 21 seats.

The conservatives and Communists teamed up after last June's vote and used their majority in parliament to send Papandreou

down and four other ministers to trial in a \$200 million bank embezzlement case.

In a separate case, Papandreou was charged with overseeing illegal telephone bugging while in office. The trials are pending.

Despite the setbacks, 71-year-old Papandreou — who had open-heart surgery 18 months ago — kept his grip on Pasok and increased its strength in parliament by three seats in November. He said this proved voters saw the charges against him as a political vendetta and had not forgotten the billions of dollars he pumped into an extensive social welfare state while in office.

Papandreou never wavered during his year-long ordeal, only accepting political responsibility as the head of government and insisting "no mud will stick to me."

"Only the personality of Papandreou held Pasok together and kept it from splitting into three or four factions during the dark days last year," said former minister Gerasimos Arsenis.

Pasok purged some associated with the scandals. Others who left in disgust came back. Papandreou looks healthier than he has in a year and his new wife — he married Liani last July — campaigns at his side.

"We will form a government within 24 hours after the result of the election," he told one television interviewer.

No one expects him to win an absolute majority and few expect Pasok to emerge as the largest party. But speculation has centered on whether Pasok will form a leftist coalition government with the Communists.

Papandreou thinks it will. "The next government will be made up of all democratic and progressive forces," he said referring to the Communists, Pasok and perhaps a seat or two from the ecologists. Such a coalition would have squeaked by with 151 seats in November.

For months the Communists have refused to deal with Pasok, especially if Papandreou — the man they voted to send to trial — remained at the helm.

Israel takes Iraq threat seriously

By Nicolas B. Tatro
The Associated Press

TEL AVIV — Israel is taking seriously Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's threat to use chemical weapons if his country was affected with some officials calling for a gas mask in every house.

But the new Middle East tensions are not likely to produce any immediate military conflict.

One reason is that the signals coming from Israeli officials indicate there will be no attempt at this point to launch a strike like the June 1981 air raid on Iraq's Osirak nuclear plant.

"I think the message here is: cool things down, don't get into unnecessary escalation and a misreading of intentions," said Dore Gold, a Middle East analyst at Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies.

Officials here have issued statements stressing Israel had "no aggressive intentions" and noting a "pre-emptive" strike would not be risk free as it was in 1981 because Iraq now had the ability to retaliate with missiles and warplanes that could reach Israel.

Also, while there is concern about Iraq's nuclear programme, it does not seem to be on the verge of producing an atomic

weapon at Israel claimed in 1981.

Jaffee centre expert Joe Alpher said Iraq's nuclear development was five to 10 years away while space agency head Yuval Neeman estimated three to five years.

Israel's reaction, for now, appeared confined to a strong showing of its technological superiority — the launch of the Ofek-2 satellite, which required a powerful missile and sophisticated electronic capabilities.

Analysts here believe Iraq is also unlikely to initiate a military action at this point, because it would invite a massive Israeli retaliation.

"I don't think the Iraqi motivation for this verbal escalation is a desire to fight with Israel at this point," said Alpher.

Writing in the liberal Haaretz newspaper, military commentator Zeev Schiff said president Hussein's tough words were a reaction to the arrest of Iraqi agents in Britain while trying to purchase and ship to Iraq electronic triggers that could be used for atomic weapons.

Alpher said the Iraqi president's record was a reason for concern, both because "he has used che-

mical weapons in the past and because he ignored the high costs in starting a war with Iran."

"because he is unpredictable and has a record for taking on more than he can chew, we have to be concerned and be prepared and to take him seriously," said Alpher.

Gold said the Iraqi leader's remarks should shift the focus of concern away from the Palestinian uprising to the overall Arab-Israeli conflict.

"Saddam Hussein has thrust the larger Arab-Israeli conflict back onto the world agenda after the intifada seemed to put it into eclipse," he said.

"It will require reassessment by both the United States and Israel of how to cope with the security challenge posed by Iraq," he added.

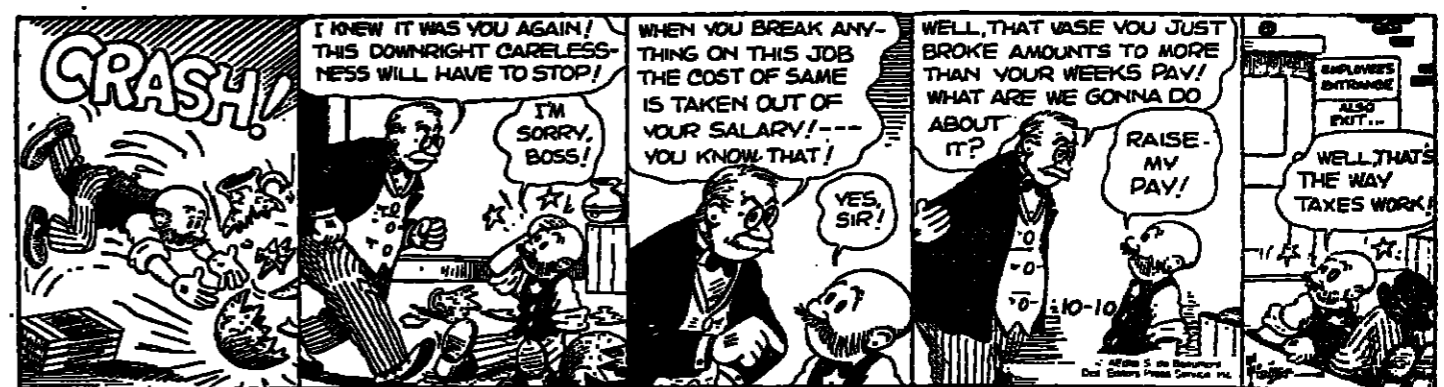
Right-wing politicians like Foreign Minister Moshe Arens picked up on the theme, saying it was clear the real obstacle to peace was Arab radicalism and not Israeli settlement building in Jerusalem.

"Where is the obstacle to peace in the Middle East?" Arens asked a mayors' conference. "Is it in Jerusalem... or is it in Baghdad when Saddam Hussein says he has the chemical weaponry to wipe half of Israel off the earth?"

Although the threat of military conflict seemed distant, a variety of officials stressed that Israel should step up its preparedness.

Michael Dekel, an aide to caretaker Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, urged the government to order the immediate distribution of gas masks to every home.

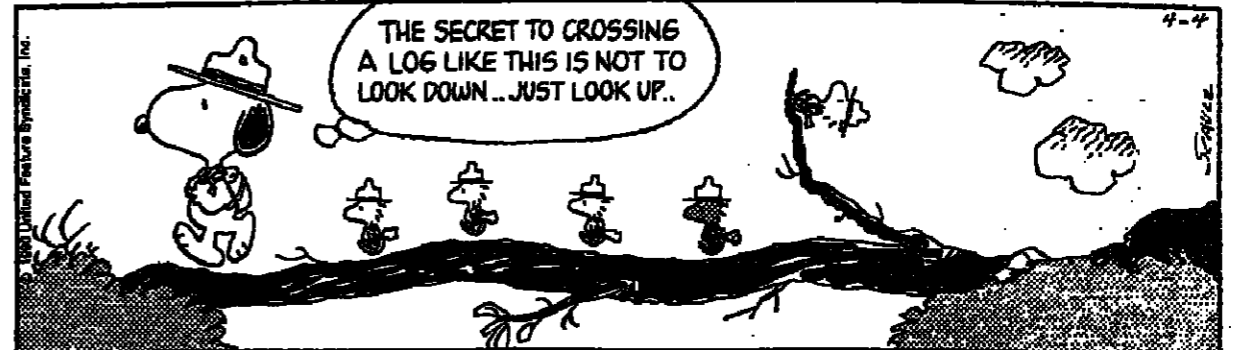
Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



Ali Mallas

LA SEMAINE DE...

Suleiman Sweiss

Aimons-nous nos antiquités?

Le vol de mosaïques omeyyades, qui a eu lieu il y a quelques jours au château d'al-Hallabat (Voir "En bref") vient nous rappeler à la réalité de la fuite de nos antiquités, et donc d'une partie de notre histoire. En 1987, plusieurs pièces avaient en effet déjà disparu d'Oum Qais, au nord du pays. Auparavant, on avait perdu la trace d'autres précieux vestiges à Jerash.

Selon toutes les informations recueillies, le vol de la semaine dernière a été commis par des "professionnels". Profitant de l'absence du gardien, à l'heure de l'iftar, et du mauvais temps, les malfaiteurs ont arraché 30 m² de mosaïque colorée de l'une des chambres du château historique. Ils y ont passé entre quatre et six heures, utilisant même un matériel sophistiqué pour s'emparer des fragments sans les endommager. Précaution, qui laisse penser que leur but est de revendre l'œuvre.

Pour contrecarrer toute accusation de négligence, le directeur des Antiquités a déclaré à un quotidien local, qu'il est presque impossible d'assurer la garde des quelque 5.000 sites historiques de Jordanie. Ne serait-ce que pour des raisons financières. Pour ma part, je préfère aborder le sujet sous un angle beaucoup plus large que la simple négligence.

Reconnaissons-le: nos gouvernements successifs n'avaient pas de politique consistante à l'égard de nos antiquités. Certes, nous disposons d'un département spécifique, mais son rôle demeure presque exclusivement administratif. Nous avons des cursus d'archéologie dans nos universités, mais cela n'empêche pas que la grande partie des fouilles de rester l'œuvre des Français, des Allemands, des Britanniques et des Américains. Des témoignages prestigieux de notre passé se trouvent par ailleurs exposés au Louvre à Paris, à Berlin ou aux Etats-Unis.

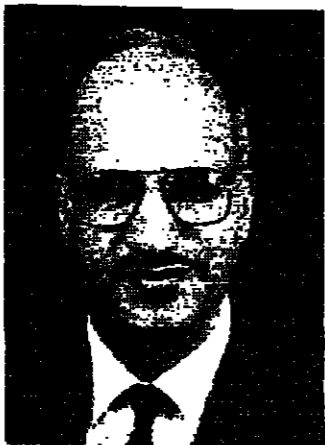
Certes, nous apprenons à nos enfants que notre pays est riche en antiquités et ils retiennent par cœur les noms de Jerash, de Petra ou de l'amphithéâtre romain d'Amman. Mais cela ne constitue pas une preuve de notre amour ou de notre appréciation de ces antiquités. Il suffit de visiter certains sites pour constater notre manque d'attention, sinon notre abandon de ces vestiges.

Tout semble se passer comme si nous avions une vision purement pragmatique de nos sites historiques. Nous voulons qu'ils nous rapportent des devises, sans avoir à faire l'effort nécessaire pour les protéger, les entretenir et les promouvoir. Or, le gouvernement met aujourd'hui l'accent sur le développement du tourisme, considéré comme un secteur économique clé. Mais notre pays ne peut devenir un pôle d'attraction important, que si nous y travaillons. Prix raisonnables, confort, distractions, font partie des paramètres incontournables. Or, nous avons rarement pensé à présenter nos antiquités sous une forme agréable, à faciliter leur accès et à les mettre en valeur via une publicité dynamique.

Pourquoi n'accordons-nous pas assez d'attention à nos antiquités? S'agit-il uniquement d'un manque de moyens, comme on le répète si souvent? Je ne le crois pas. Au fond, la sauvegarde et la promotion du patrimoine national fait partie de la structure culturelle et historique d'une nation. C'est une marque de civilisation.

De manière évidente, nous avons encore beaucoup à faire pour donner à aimer nos antiquités. Je dirais même que cela fait partie de notre éducation et de notre identité nationales. Combien de nos compatriotes visitent chaque année nos musées et sites historiques? Combien, parmi eux, connaissent les détails de nos monuments? De combien de guides bi- ou trilingues disposons-nous? Il y a quelques mois, une enseignante s'est étonnée de voir que de nombreux élèves et habitants de Zarqa passent quotidiennement devant le château Chabib, sans rien connaître de son histoire et de son importance.

La protection de nos antiquités deviendra réalité quand les responsables adopteront une politique d'elles et de notre histoire. Il est notamment temps d'augmenter le budget du département des Antiquités et de mettre sur pied des programmes, en collaboration avec les universités, pour la promotion et la sauvegarde systématiques des sites du royaume. Parce qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un investissement dans le passé, mais bien plutôt dans le présent et même le futur.



Il rapporte 2 millions de dinars par mois au ministère des Finances

Le cadastre: un bon plan

Né en 1926 et définitivement structuré depuis 1953, date de la nomination de son premier directeur général jordanien, le service du cadastre compte aujourd'hui plus de 1.100 employés et rapporte à l'Etat quelque 24 millions de dinars par an. Explication: les transactions de terrains vont bon train, même s'il reste plus de 76,6% du territoire national à mettre en plans.



L'informatisation du cadastre se révèle nécessaire, vu la tâche qu'il reste à accomplir.

Installé à djebel al-Weibdeh, le département du cadastre jordanien est un service public qui pèse lourd. Numériquement, d'abord: Ahmad Jamal Hussein, son directeur général par intérim depuis septembre 1989, se trouve en effet à la tête de plus de 1.100 salariés, répartis en trois sections (administration, enregistrement et équipes de terrain). Economiquement, ensuite: il rapporte à lui tout seul quelque 24 millions de dinars par an aux Finances, son ministère de tutelle.

Il est vrai que le cadastre fut l'une des premières institutions de la Transjordanie, dès sa libération du joug ottoman au lendemain de la première guerre mondiale. Le traité de Lausanne, signé en juillet 1923, ordonna à la Turquie vaincue de livrer à son ancienne colonie l'ensemble des documents fonciers la concernant. Trois ans plus tard, naissait le premier service d'enregistrement des biens fonciers, doté de 7 bureaux régionaux, dont un à Amman, alors petite bourgade parmi d'autres.

«Sa première tâche consista à mettre fin aux éternelles et meurtrières querelles de territoire entre tribus, en délimitant les communes», rappelle Kamel Nasrawi, directeur du service de documentation et de photographie du cadastre, où il travaille depuis 25 ans. Pour ce faire, le "Lands Department" de l'époque, placé sous la direction des Britanniques, combina les méthodes héritées de l'empire et le système de triangulation, introduit sur les deux rives du Jourdain par la Grande-Bretagne.

«Ainsi a pu commencer le travail de répartition des propriétés», poursuit Kamel Nasrawi. Des plans ont été établis, au cours des années 1930. Plans manuels, qui régimentèrent mis à jour, constituent encore aujourd'hui, dans bien des cas, les seuls documents disponibles. Car le cadastre du royaume hachémite est encore loin d'être achevé.

«21.000 des 90.000 km² du territoire national ont été mis sur plan», précise Husam Azar, directeur du service des statistiques et chargé des relations publiques. Ça ne représente qu'un peu plus

de 23,3% des terres, mais c'est là que vit la grande majorité de la population». De fait, les principales zones encore vierges de tout bornage officiel, sont constituées des déserts de l'est et du sud-est jordanien. Régions, qui appartiennent pour la plupart à l'Etat, assure-t-il.

Bien qu'il leur reste beaucoup, de pain sur la planche à dessin, les responsables du cadastre se montrent plutôt optimistes. Surtout depuis l'entrée en service du centre informatique national, en 1987. «Il s'agit d'un système, mis en chantier avec l'aide des Nations Unies, qui nous permet



notamment de disposer d'un index nominal des propriétés foncières et de dessiner des plans en quelques minutes», souligne Husam Azar. Entre 1980 et 1983, le département s'était par ailleurs doté d'équipements de terrain de pointe, dont des "visuels-enregistreurs au laser", également fournis par le PNUD (projet des Nations Unies pour le développement).

C'est avec ce matériel, que travaillaient actuellement les géomètres, en mission à Mafrak, dans le nord-est du pays, ou encore à Ma'an et Tafleeh, dans le sud. «Pour ces premiers relevés,

on demande à tous les propriétaires ou soit-disant propriétaires de fournir à nos équipes tous les documents qu'ils possèdent, explique Husam Azar. Une fois le bornage terminé, nous reportons les évaluations, en surfaces et valeurs financières, sur des matrices provisoires. Ces dernières sont ensuite mises à la disposition du public dans les mairies. Les gens ont un mois pour faire part de leurs réclamations».

Les doléances des quelque 600.000 propriétaires fonciers du royaume sont plutôt rares, fait-on remarquer au cadastre. «Même dans les régions tribales, comme celle des Bani Sakir, que nous avons "encadrées" peu après 1970, les chefs nous viennent en aide. Ils connaissent chaque recoin par son nom et assistent nos géomètres pour éviter tout malentendu», assure Kamel Nasrawi. Il arrive, cependant, que deux familles se disputent un lopin de terre. «Si aucun accord à l'amiable n'intervient, le dossier est remis entre les mains de l'un des trois juges des tribunaux civils, détachés auprès de nos services. C'est lui qui entend les deux parties et prend la décision finale et irrévocable», poursuit-il.

Des matrices définitives sont ensuite éditées. Une copie reste à Amman et les autres prennent le chemin des 30 bureaux régionaux d'enregistrement, dont dépendent les terrains. «Les propriétaires peuvent ensuite venir retirer leurs actes officiels de propriété. Ils doivent alors s'acquitter d'une taxe, proportionnelle à la valeur de leurs biens», précise Husam Azar. Une taxe, dont le montant s'élève à 1,5% de l'estimation du cadastre. «Si l'acte est retiré plus de 18 mois après sa publication, elle passe à 3%», ajoute-t-il.

Mais là ne réside pas l'essentiel des importantes recettes du cadastre jordanien. Elles proviennent en effet majoritairement des impôts, prélevés sur les opérations de transaction. Opérations, qui passent de bout en bout par son intermédiaire, la profession de notaire n'existant pas dans le royaume.

«En cas de vente ou d'achat de terrain, les deux contractants doivent obligatoirement passer par les bureaux d'enregistrement, explique Kamel Nasrawi. Nous faisons alors une nouvelle évaluation des parcelles concernées. Si tout concorde, le vendeur paie une taxe, équivalente à 4% du prix fixé. Celle de l'acheteur s'élève à 6%». En clair, l'Etat empêche 10% du montant de la transaction.

Cette ponction financière permet chaque mois au trésor public de récolter quelque 2 millions de dinars. Une coquette somme, qui témoigne de la vitalité du marché foncier en Jordanie. «Il y a eu un grand boom entre 1972 et 1983», remarque Husam Azar. Après une stagnation de quelques années, les transactions ont repris en force à partir de 1988, avec la chute du dinar. Les recettes du mois d'août de cette année-là ont même atteint un record: 4 millions de dinars. Les manœuvres spéculatives de quelques rusés investisseurs n'y sont d'ailleurs pas étrangères. «Il arrive parfois qu'un même terrain change de main 4 à 5 fois en quelques semaines», reconnaît Kamel Nasrawi.

Alain Renon.

EN BREF

Réchauffement. La Jordanie nommera prochainement un ambassadeur en Libye, ont annoncé mardi les autorités, en ajoutant que Tripoli avait de son côté officiellement exprimé le souhait de réouvrir son ambassade à Amman. Une délégation de parlementaires du royaume hachémite se rendra par ailleurs dans les prochaines semaines à Tripoli, dans le cadre de la normalisation entre les deux pays. La Jordanie avait rompu ses relations diplomatiques avec la Libye en février 1984, après la mise à sac et l'incendie de son ambassade. Le 23 septembre 1987, Amman avait annoncé dans un bref communiqué qu'elle renouait avec Tripoli. Une réconciliation plutôt "tiède" à l'époque et qui n'avait pas donné lieu à un échange d'ambassadeurs.

Réduction. Crise financière oblige, le gouvernement a décidé de réduire, à partir de juillet prochain, le nombre des fonctionnaires des ambassades. Cette mesure d'austérité concerne des conseillers et des attachés, ainsi que le personnel non diplomatique travaillant dans 38 ambassades jordaniennes. Elle devrait toucher près de 50 personnes et permettre au trésor public d'économiser un million de dinars.

Défection. Un soldat jordanien, qui s'était infiltré dans la nuit de dimanche à lundi derniers en Cisjordanie occupée, a été arrêté le lendemain matin par l'armée israélienne. Le conscrit avait franchi la ligne de cessez-le-feu avec son arme chargée en ouvrant une brèche dans les barbelés installés dans la région de Jericho. Cet incident porte à sept le nombre de tentatives d'infiltrations à partir de la Jordanie, enregistrées depuis le début de l'année.

Assassinat. Un Palestinien du camp de réfugiés de Baq'a, au nord d'Amman, a été abattu lundi soir de plusieurs balles tirées par deux individus masqués. La victime, un vendeur de cassettes vidéo âgé de 31 ans, était membre du Front populaire de libération de la Palestine (FPLP de Georges Habache). Il s'agissait cependant d'un crime crapuleux, selon la police, qui estime que «la vente par la victime de cassettes érotiques [à sans doute] poussé ses agresseurs» à le tuer.

Jérusalem. Le roi Hussein a affirmé mardi à Amman que la résolution du Sénat américain, clamant que Jérusalem est et doit rester la capitale d'Israël, «nuit aux efforts de paix au Proche-Orient». Cette déclaration «ébranle même l'espoir de parvenir à la paix», a notamment déclaré le souverain hachémite, dans une déclaration à l'agence Petra. Il a par ailleurs relevé que «la proclamation par Israël de Jérusalem comme ville unifiée et comme sa capitale est contraire à la résolution 242 du Conseil de sécurité [des Nations Unies] et constitue une violation du droit international, qui interdit l'occupation ou l'annexion par la force du territoire d'autrui».

Soutien. Réuni en session extraordinaire à Tunis à la demande de Bagdad, le Conseil de la Ligue arabe s'est engagé jeudi à défendre l'Irak en cas d'agression israélienne et mis en garde l'Etat hébreu contre toute attaque visant ce pays «sous n'importe quel prétexte». Le même jour, les quatre ministres des Affaires étrangères du Conseil de coopération arabe (CCA), réunis en session extraordinaire à Amman, ont eux aussi réaffirmé leur solidarité avec l'Irak. Ils ont également appelé à faire du Proche-Orient une «zone d'indépendance». Ces prises de positions interviennent après la détérioration des relations entre Londres et Bagdad, consécutives à l'exécution, le 15 mars en Irak, du journaliste Farzad Bazof puis à l'annonce par les Britanniques de la découverte, la semaine dernière, d'un trafic de composants de détecteurs nucléaires au profit de l'Irak. Le président Saddam Hussein avait violemment réagi lundi, en affirmant que son pays disposait d'une «arme chimique» et qu'il détruirait «la moitié d'Israël» en cas d'attaque.

Satellite. Dix-neuf mois après avoir placé sur orbite son premier satellite, Israël vient de connaître un deuxième succès en lançant mardi OFEK-2. Satellite civil, comme son prédécesseur, OFEK-1 reste cependant un point d'interrogation. L'Etat hébreu, qui l'a construit de bout en bout, n'a en effet pas révélé ses objectifs ni ses caractéristiques.

Tactique. Le président libanais Elias Hraoui a accepté jeudi une alliance tactique avec le chef de la milice chrétienne des Forces libanaises (FL), Samir Geagea, pour faire face à leur ennemi commun, le général Michel Aoun. M. Hraoui a notamment déclaré qu'il avait l'intention de répondre favorablement à la demande, faite la veille par Samir Geagea, de prendre le contrôle des casernes du "pays chrétien", dont les FL se sont emparés depuis le déclenchement des hostilités intercommunales, le 31 janvier.

Périples. Cinq sénateurs américains, dont le chef de la minorité républicaine Robert Dole, ont entamé hier un périple de neuf jours au Proche-Orient, dans l'espoir de venir en aide au processus de paix. Les cinq parlementaires avaient annoncé jeudi leur intention de se rendre en Syrie, en Jordanie, en Egypte et en Israël pour s'entretenir avec les dirigeants de chacun de ces pays. Ils ont été reçus, avant leur départ, par George Bush. Le porte-parole de la Maison Blanche a cependant souligné que les cinq sénateurs n'étaient porteurs d'aucun message du président des Etats-Unis.

Sommet. Le prochain sommet américano-soviétique aura lieu plus tôt que prévu. George Bush et Mikhail Gorbatchev se retrouveront en effet du 30 mai au 3 juin, a annoncé Washington, sans toutefois préciser le lieu de la rencontre. Les impératifs de politique intérieure en URSS, notamment la préparation du 28ème congrès du Parti communiste, expliquent en grande partie ce changement de calendrier.

Contrat. La firme automobile italienne Fiat devrait pouvoir ouvrir prochainement une usine en Iran, après l'accord conclu jeudi à Rome par la commission mixte italo-iranienne. Téhéran s'est en effet engagé à payer à l'Italie la note des travaux d'aménagement du port de Bandar-Abbas, réalisés avant la Révolution de 1979 et dont le coût s'élève à quelque 480 millions de dollars. L'assainissement des relations financières entre les deux pays devrait donc permettre à Fiat d'installer en Iran une chaîne de montage de 150.000 véhicules par an et de suppléer ainsi le projet du constructeur français Peugeot, lui aussi sur les rangs.

Gouvernement. Le président de l'Union chrétienne-démocrate de RDA, Lothar de Maizière, 50 ans, a été chargé jeudi à une écrasante majorité par le Parlement allemand de former le premier gouvernement du pays démocratiquement élu. Des négociations se sont aussitôt engagées entre les trois partis conservateurs de l'Alliance pour l'Allemagne pour permettre au nouveau premier ministre de présenter son cabinet le 11 avril. Par ailleurs, le gouvernement ouest-allemand a indiqué cette semaine qu'il était décidé à boucler l'union monétaire entre les deux Allemagne avant les élections locales du 6 mai en RDA.

Aux urnes. Les prochaines élections générales en bulgarie se dérouleront le 10 juin, a annoncé jeudi le président Petar Mladenov. Un deuxième tour est prévu le 17 juin. Les électeurs bulgares auront à choisir 200 députés au suffrage majoritaire et 200 autres à la proportionnelle. L'Assemblée constituante élue aura pour tâche principale d'élaborer en 18 mois une nouvelle constitution pour le pays.

Mal aimée. Margaret Thatcher est le premier ministre anglais le plus impopulaire depuis un demi-siècle, si l'on en croit le sondage publié vendredi par le "Daily Telegraph" (droite). La dame de fer ne recueille en effet que 24% d'opinion favorable. L'opposition travailliste se voit, elle, gratifiée d'une avance record de 24,5 points sur les conservateurs dans les intentions de votes des Britanniques.

Asile. Le gouvernement français a décidé mercredi de tripler le nombre des magistrats chargés d'examiner les demandes d'asile déposées par des étrangers réfugiés en France, afin de faire face au nombre croissant de ces dernières et de résorber les quelque 20.000 dossiers en attente. Le conseil des ministres s'est notamment prononcé en faveur de l'octroi aux magistrats de la Cour des comptes ou des tribunaux administratifs des prérogatives de président de la Commission des recours. Commission, chargée d'examiner en appel les demandes déposées par l'Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides (OFPRA).

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Rencontres Arafat-Carter-Mitterrand à Paris

Double caution pour le chef de l'OLP

L'ex-président américain Jimmy Carter et Yasser Arafat se sont entretenus pour la première fois mercredi à Paris. Les deux hommes avaient auparavant été reçus par le président François Mitterrand. Ces rencontres, qualifiées d'«historiques» par le dirigeant palestinien, constituent un encouragement et une caution de la politique pacifique, qu'il imprime à l'OLP depuis novembre 1988.

«Il est utile pour moi de rencontrer les dirigeants qui peuvent prendre des décisions et M. Arafat en fait clairement partie. Il fait tout son possible ces derniers mois pour promouvoir le processus [au Proche-Orient]. Ce propos flatteur ont été adressés mercredi soir à Paris au chef de l'OLP par Jimmy Carter, à l'issue de la première rencontre, jamais organisée entre les deux hommes. L'ancien président des Etats-Unis, qui s'est entretenu pendant une heure en tête-à-tête avec Yasser Arafat, après une réunion à trois avec le président français François Mitterrand, s'est même fendu d'un satisfecit appuyé, en excluant son interlocuteur du nombre des responsables, qui «en Israël, parmi les Palestiniens, les Syriens, les Jordaniens et les Libanais» ne représentent pas «de manière adéquate les aspirations à la paix de leurs peuples».

Le président de la centrale palestinienne a, pour sa part, estimé les deux entretiens «importantes, voire historiques». Elles constituent, en tout cas, de l'avis des observateurs, une double caution de la politique pacifique qu'il imprime à l'OLP depuis le Congrès national palestinien d'Alger en novembre 1988. A l'époque, le CNP, tout en décrétant la naissance de l'«Etat de Palestine», avait en effet reconnu le droit à l'existence d'Israël. Malgré les blocages actuels, notamment de la part des dirigeants de l'Etat hébreu, les rencontres de Paris encouragent Yasser Arafat à persévérer dans cette voie.

Ce dernier attend d'une part de Jimmy Carter, transformé en «Monsieur bons offices», qu'il plaide la cause palestinienne auprès de Washington. L'ancien président a bien entendu rencontré (...) George Bush avant sa visite à Paris, a-t-il affirmé, ajoutant qu'il en irait sans doute de même à son retour aux Etats-Unis. Un optimisme néanmoins tempéré par l'indécision, qui a souligné les caractéristiques de son initiative, tout en assurant qu'il en rendrait compte aux autorités de son pays «si elles le lui demandaient». La Maison Blanche a, quant à elle, tenu à rappeler jeudi que M. Carter «n'est pas un émissaire de [son] gouvernement».

L'autre impact de l'événement de mercredi est la remise sur orbite de la France dans les efforts de paix au Proche-Orient. La rencontre Carter-Arafat s'est déroulée à Paris à la demande du leader et non à Stockholm, comme l'avait suggéré l'ex-président américain. Yasser Arafat n'a d'ailleurs pas caché les raisons de son choix, en qualifiant d'«effectif» le rôle de la France, «par les relations qu'elle entretient avec les Etats de la région» et par sa «renommée internationale». L'Hexagone, a-t-il ajouté, a une «position équilibrée» dans le conflit israélo-arabe et le président Mitterrand est «un homme de principe, qui jouit d'un grand respect, non seulement au sein du peuple palestinien, mais également à l'échelle mondiale».

Des intellectuels dénoncent la torture des détenus

Des intellectuels israéliens ont dénoncé mercredi à Jérusalem le recours de plus en plus systématique à la torture par l'armée, la police et le Shin Beth (services de sécurité), lors des interrogatoires de prisonniers, notamment palestiniens. Membres du «Comité public contre la torture en Israël» (CPTI), les protestataires ont présenté au cours d'une conférence de presse plusieurs cas de détenus palestiniens et israéliens, ayant passé des «aveux complets» sous diverses pressions physiques avant d'être innocents par la justice.

«Dans le contexte de l'intifada, toute organisation humanitaire ainsi que tout avocat, travaillant avec des clients palestiniens, entend sans cesse des histoires de torture. Dans ce cadre affligeant, une enquête judiciaire indépendante est nécessaire», a estimé Stanley Cohen, professeur de criminologie à l'université hébraïque de Jérusalem. L'avocate Lea Zemel a pour sa part dénoncé «la routine», qui voit en Israël les suspects privés «de sommeil et de nourriture pendant des jours entiers. C'est la routine, a-t-elle ajouté, de les maintenir attachés dans les positions les plus inconfortables, de les battre sur les parties sensibles du corps, notamment sur les organes génitaux».

De son côté, le psychiatre Yehoyakim Marton, également membre du CPTI, a dénoncé la participation de médecins israéliens aux interrogatoires. Il a d'ailleurs lancé un appel à l'ensemble de ses collègues, pour qu'ils refusent de s'associer à de telles pratiques. (D'après agences)

A. R. avec agences.

Réglementation pour les mannequins en France

Finie la loi de la jungle

Le gouvernement français a adopté le 28 mars dernier un projet de loi visant à réglementer l'activité des quelque 150 agences de mannequins du pays. Une mesure, qui devrait mettre fin aux abus, dont sont particulièrement victimes les modèles mineurs et étrangers.

Jeunes, belles, bronzées, élégantes... Les mannequins présentent un visage lisse et souriant au fil des pages des magazines de mode. Et pourtant, cette profession de rêve est, en France, soumise à la loi de la jungle. Environ 15.000 femmes, hommes (entre 30% et 40% des modèles) et enfants (de plus en plus nombreux dans la publicité) travaillent sans contrat écrit, sans sécurité sociale, et, pour les étrangers, sans permis de séjour ou carte de travail.

Après des années de combat, mené par quelques syndicalistes, le gouvernement français a décidé le 28 mars dernier de réglementer par une loi le fonctionnement des quelque 150 agences de mannequins de l'Hexagone. Des agences, qui depuis 20 ans disposaient d'un pouvoir absolu sur les milliers de modèles, qui passaient par leur intermédiaire.

Le projet adopté par le conseil des ministres donne également



15.000 mannequins travaillent en France sans contrat.

une existence légale à l'activité, encore controversée des enfants et des jeunes de moins de 16 ans. Servane Cherouat, responsable du syndicat français des mannequins, estime d'ailleurs que le problème posé par ces derniers a servi de détonateur auprès des pouvoirs publics. «Des parents naïfs, trop heureux de voir leur petit rembourner parce qu'il est mignon, se font escroquer par des gens sans scrupules», explique-t-elle. Trop d'agences en effet leur soutiennent de l'argent, en promettant que leurs enfants feront carrière dans la publicité.

La nouvelle loi a pour autre objectif d'empêcher l'exploitation des mineurs à des fins pornographiques. Selon des enquêtes publiées par la presse française, un grand nombre de photos licencieuses mettant en cause des enfants seraient réalisées en France. La séance de pose pouvant atteindre les 20.000 francs (3.500 dollars). Désormais, l'agrément des agences employant des mineurs sera soumis à un renouvellement annuel, ce qui devrait les inciter à la prudence. Quant aux photographes indépendants, ils devront demander des autorisations spéciales. Enfin, le recrutement d'un enfant-mannequin donnera obligatoirement lieu à un contrat de travail écrit. La répartition du salaire entre celui-ci et ses représentants légaux est également fixée par la loi.

Le texte ministériel réglemente également les agences, qui se présentaient jusqu'à présent comme de simples intermédiaires. Elles seront considérées comme des employeurs et devront fournir une garantie financière. Elles seront notamment obligées de

PASSEZ-MOI MON FRANÇAIS

La rubrique de Flavia Romero

Les frissons de M. Duponrossmith

Ave Egeria,

A propos de tentes, les étrangers possèdent des canadiennes, parfaitement étanches et hermétiques, qui, usitées dans le désert, me donnent à la fois une envie irrésistible de rire et de pleurer. Je vais te raconter la ballade de Monsieur Duponrossmith avec un groupe d'amis.

Notre Occidental, amoureux de la nature, assoiffé d'aventure, épris de liberté, quitte la contrainte de la ville, du trafic, de sa maison et de son bureau et part pour un week-end dans le désert. Il aimerait bien faire le voyage à dos de chameau, mais où trouver le temps? Il se plie à la nécessité et fait des kilomètres enfilés dans la cabine d'un 4x4 plein comme un œuf, qui sent l'essence et laisse derrière lui une traînée d'oxyde de carbone puante. Il débarque finalement dans le désert, très loin de «tout».

Courbattu, les mains aux reins, il se tortille pour se délier... Un petit rot, un petit pet, le libèrent de tous les kilomètres qui l'ont vu ballotté au gré des pistes. Il tourne un regard appréciateur et dominateur tout autour de lui. L'horizon lui appartient. Il commence donc par prendre tout de suite possession de cette vastitude: il descend la tente et la monte (ce qui prend un bon moment); il descend la table aussi (voyez comme elle est légère et peu encombrante); les chaises assorties (elles aussi occupent un rien d'espace); le liquide anti-moustiques, les assiettes, les verres, les couvertures, les serviettes en papier, les kleenex, puis la glacière des boissons, les thermos d'eau, la glacière du dîner (salade de tomates de terre, salade de chou à la mayonnaise, toutes sortes de viandes et de saucisses à faire griller, dessert, fruits, café et pousse-café) et la glacière du petit déjeuner (tarte aux pommes, céréales et lait, fromage, œufs, jambon, Nescafé, thé, café). «Ô ciel! que je suis bête! J'ai oublié le cacao. Tant pis, on va s'en passer».

Le grill, dernier modèle, débarque aussi et notre ami allume le charbon avec un liquide (puant), qui fait la besogne vite et bien (avec un peu de patience, l'odeur disparaît) et il allume un grand feu de bois. C'est si beau de regarder les flammes... Sans compter que cela effraye les fauves.

M. Duponrossmith est fatigué, mais, plein d'enthousiasme et de joie de vivre, il se rend à peine compte que le soleil se couche et que l'horizon, à l'ouest, est embrasé. «Ô que c'est beau», dit-il enfin. Il n'y a vraiment personne à cent milles à la ronde, il pourrait même se perdre. Non, jamais: il a fait réviser sa voiture avant de partir, il a de l'essence en réserve, des bonnes cartes, la boussole, le sextant, les jumelles, sans compter que ces amis restés en ville savent à peu près où il est. Tout de même, cette aventure dans la solitude lui donne un délicieux frisson de peur.

Toutes ces tâches accomplies, il décide finalement d'aller faire un petit (façon de dire) pipi, qu'il retient depuis quelques temps. Il vise d'un jet chaud et blond un lézard, qui ne se laisse pas faire et s'enfuit sveltes sous un buisson de thym. Le dernier geste, bref et habituel, se fige: du coin de l'œil, notre ami voit un chameau avec Bédouin en selle, qui le regarde, désabusés. M. Duponrossmith ramasse les brins de sa dignité et de son sens de l'humour, bredouille un «salamalekum» et rengaine son bien. Finalement, sa famille et ses amis réunis, on dîne. On se gave avec délice, c'est bon, somptueux même.

La nuit est tombée très vite. On bavarde, on chante, on raconte des histoires plus ou moins osées, originales ou rassées. Le feu, qui n'a plus été entretenu, commence à décliner. Monsieur Duponrossmith décide d'aller se coucher. Vous auriez beau insister pour qu'il reste dans l'obscurité, en silence, à observer les étoiles et «sentir» le désert. Une peur profondément enracinée lui fait imaginer des légions de scorpions, hyènes et vipères, prêtes à l'attaquer, flamberge au vent.

La dernière image que vous auriez de nos amis serait celle de leurs postérieurs et de la plante de leurs pieds, quand, à quatre pattes, ils pénètrent dans leurs canadiennes et zzz...! s'enferment dans ces kystes sur la peau du désert.

Les étoiles, lointaines et froides, scintillent. Vole Egeria, j'espère t'avoir amusée. C'était un peu facile, mais si vrai!

A L'AFFICHE

Conférence au CCF

De Gaulle entre deux feux

le rôle du général de Gaulle, figure historique de la résistance française et de la Cinquième République, dans le processus de décolonisation de l'après-guerre fait l'objet d'une conférence animée par l'historien Pierre Vidal-Naquet, jeudi soir au centre culturel français (voir ci-dessous). Impérialiste pour les uns, homme de la paix avec l'Algérie pour les autres, de Gaulle déchaine encore aujourd'hui les passions autour d'une période de l'histoire de France particulièrement sensible.

Son retour au pouvoir en juin 1958, en pleine guerre d'Algérie, intervint il est vrai sur fond de tension militaire et de campagne en sa faveur, orchestrée par les partisans de l'Algérie française. Après leur avoir apporté son soutien et lancé notamment les fameux «Je vous ai compris» à Alger puis «Vive l'Algérie française» à Mostaganem, de Gaulle changea peu à peu de politique et finit par signer en mars 1962 les accords d'Evian, prélude à l'indépendance de l'ancienne colonie.

Ce revirement lui valut une condamnation à mort de la part de l'Organisation de l'armée secrète (OAS). Il échappa d'ailleurs de justesse à un attentat, au Petit-Clamart, près de Paris, en août 1962. Il est de toute évidence bien difficile de trancher sur la «trahison» ou le «pragmatisme éclairé» de celui que François Mitterrand appelait alors «l'homme du coup d'Etat permanent». Ce qui est sûr, c'est que même s'il a changé d'attitude pendant les quatre dernières années du conflit, il lui revient d'avoir su mettre un terme à une guerre vaine et «sale».

Reste que son comportement à l'égard des anciennes colonies africaines de la France ou encore des territoires d'Outre-Mer reste marquée par un paternalisme parfois condescendant, sinon méprisant. Le problème des harkis, ces Algériens qui avaient choisi le camp français, demeure une épine dans sa politique. Aujourd'hui encore, personne ne leur reconnaît de véritables droits, comme si la France cherchait encore et toujours à occulter ses erreurs passées.

A.R.

EXPOSITIONS

Peinture. Le peintre palestinien Ahmad Nawash expose 21 de ses dernières toiles au centre culturel français. Douleur de l'exil. CCF, fermeture ce dimanche à 17h00. Entrée libre. Tél: 636445.

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Centre culturel français, du lundi 9 au dimanche 29 avril. Entrée libre. Tél: 636445.

CONFERENCES

De Gaulle et la décolonisation. Helleniste, directeur d'études à l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences sociales de Paris, l'historien français Pierre Vidal-Naquet évoquera la politique du général de Gaulle face aux mouvements indépendantistes.

Centre culturel français, jeudi 12 avril à 20h30 (en français).

DIVERS

Vélo acrobatique. Cinq équipes ouest-allemandes affrontent les formations jordanaises de vélo acrobatique. Des épreuves artistiques et des mini-matches de «cyclo-football» figurent également au menu de cette manifestation, la première de la saison en Jordanie. Grand gymnase de la Cité des Sports d'Amman (route de l'université de Jordanie), mardi 10 et mercredi 11 avril, à partir de 20h00. Entrée libre.

JEUX

Mots croisés

par Florence Montiel

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										

Horizontalement.

1: bordant les chantiers. 2: a exprimé sa joie; en tenue d'Adam; après la tétée. 3: elle a souvent des causes économiques. 4: boîte à images; union. 5: infinitif; étoile. 6: expression enfantine; fin de messe phonétique; elle régit, phonétiquement, auprès des dieux. 7: ne pousse pas; négation. 8: sortie; adjectif possessif. 9: certains chemins le sont. 10: négation; transpiration.

Verticalement.

A: vanité. B: affectionnerais. C: pronom personnel; n'a pas bougé, phonétiquement. D: au-dessus des techniques. E: ne fait aucun doute; particulièrement appréciée pendant les grosses chaleurs. F: philosophe français; avance. G: Profession privilégiée des inspirés. H: on le pointe parfois en guise d'accusation; classement. I: distraire. J: qui ont vu le jour; adjectif possessif.

(Solution la semaine prochaine)

Solution de la grille N. 3:

Horizontalement.

1: cafetiers. 2: ourlets. 3: ou; about. 4: pendules. 5: tenir; pl. 6: l; pas. 7: mu; on; ét. 8: étreindre. 9: escouade. 10: testés; Est.

Verticalement.

A: compliment. B: au; ut. C: frontiers. D: éluder; est. E: te; m; Oise. F: Italiennes. G: ester; d. H: os; perle. I: élue; pâtée. J: toise; et.

CINEMA

Un Américain à Paris, de Vincente Minelli, avec Gene Kelly, Oscar Levant, Nina Foch et Leslie Caron (1951). Un jeune artiste américain à Paris, pris entre l'antipathie qu'il ressent envers sa mécène et l'amour d'une adolescente. La comédie musicale américaine a fait beaucoup mieux.

Centre américain, dimanche 8 et jeudi 12 avril à 15h00 (en anglais).

Remontons les Champs Elysées, de Sacha Guitry, avec Lisette Lanvin, Sacha Guitry, Josseline Gaël et René Fauchois (1938). Un jeudi de septembre 1938, un professeur de mathématiques, interrompant son cours pour raconter à ses élèves l'histoire de l'avenue des Champs Elysées...

Centre culturel français, mardi 10 avril à 20h30 (en français, sous-titré en arabe).

Ciné-club. Durant le mois de Ramadan: un seul long métrage quotidien à 20h30. Le film de mercredi sera cependant précédé d'un court métrage.

Dimanche 8: «Coming to America», de John Landis, avec Eddy Murphy (1989). Quand le prince héritier d'un royaume africain panaméen se met en tête de trouver lui-même sa future épouse et part la chercher aux Etats-Unis. Le mythe US n'est pas mort... Lundi 9: «Soylent Green», d'Edward G. Robinson, avec Charlton Heston et Leigh Taylor-Young (1973).

Mardi 10: «No Mercy», de Richard Pearce, avec Richard Gere et Kim Basinger (1989). Quand un policier se met en tête de venger à lui tout seul la mort d'un ami. Plat froid, sur fond d'histoire d'amour, de course. Mercredi 11: «Palestine in the eye», court métrage de Mustafa Abu-Ali, photographie de Hani Juharia. Hommage au cinéaste Hani Juharia, mort en 1976 au Sud-Liban, en filmant l'invasion israélienne.

«Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade», de Steven Spielberg, avec Harrison Ford et Sean Connery (1989). Rebelote avec la conquête du Saint Graal, cette fois convoité par les nazis. Sean Connery, toujours aussi bon...

Jeudi 12: «Coma», avec Geneviève Bujold, Michael Douglas et Richard Widmark (1978). Une jeune femme médecin soupçonne son établissement de plonger volontairement des malades dans le coma et de se livrer à un trafic d'organes. Le suspense est dans le synopsis et il y reste... Vendredi 13: «Batman», avec Jack Nicholson et Kim Basinger (1989).

Samedi 14: «Dead Poet's Society» de Peter Weir, avec Robin Williams (1989).

Films en version originale. Tél: 636445. Route de l'université de Jordanie, première à droite après l'hôtel Jérusalem puis première à gauche. Le ciné-club se trouve à environ 300m, sur la gauche.

DIMANCHE

18h00 - Des Chiffres et des Lettres: jeu.
18h15 - L'Ecole des Fans, émission pour les jeunes, animée par Jacques Martin. Invitée: Malène Jobert.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Aujourd'hui en France: magazine culturel.

LUNDI

17h40 - «La Lettre perdue» (film). Quand un vieil homme demeure le seul soutien moral d'une fillette agonisante...
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Magazine sportif hebdomadaire.

MARDI

18h00 - Des Chiffres et des Lettres: jeu.
18h20 - Intertropiques: documentaire.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Aujourd'hui en Jordanie: magazine local réalisé et présenté par Saleh Madi.

MERCREDI

18h00 - La Valse en Carton (2), ou l'histoire romantique de la chanteuse d'origine portugaise Linda de Suza.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Le Cycle des Fleurs: documentaire.

JEUDI

18h00 - Des Chiffres et des Lettres: jeu.
18h30 - La Chance aux Chansons: émission de variétés françaises, animée par Pascal Sevran. Invitée: Annie Cordy.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Science à la Une: documentaire.

VENREDI

17h30 - «Le Port du Désir», film policier en noir et blanc de E. T. Greiville, avec Jean Gabin, Henri Vidal et Jean-Roger Cassimon. Marseille. Chargé de renflouer une épave qui obstrue l'entrée du port, un capitaine se retrouve hébergé par un certain «M. Black» dans un établissement louche...
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Portraits: documentaire sur les femmes dans le monde du travail. Cette semaine: les filieuses.

SAMEDI

18h00 - Couteau à la redécouverte du monde: documentaire.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Sauvage et Beau: documentaire sur les animaux sauvages.

LE SAVIEZ-VOUS ?

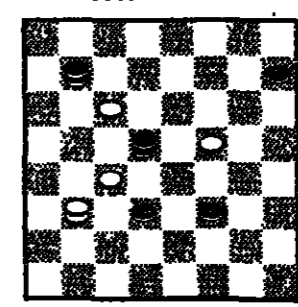
ADOPTIONS. Les Français adoptent de plus en plus d'enfants d'origine étrangère, venant pour la plupart d'entre eux d'Amérique du Sud, selon une enquête menée par le ministère des Affaires étrangères. En 1988, 2.441 enfants étrangers ont ainsi été accueillis par des familles de l'Hexagone, soit 706 de plus que l'année précédente. Parmi eux, 539 étaient des mineurs brésiliens; 280 venaient de Colombie et 164 du Chili. Les adoptions ont également été nombreuses en Corée (398), à Madagascar (259), en Inde (170) et en Pologne (148).

73 JOURS DE PLUS. L'espérance de vie des Américains a atteint en 1987 les 75 ans, soit une progression de 73 jours par rapport à l'année précédente; a annoncé la semaine dernière le Centre pour le contrôle des maladies (CDC) d'Atlanta en Géorgie. Le rapport précise cependant que cette bonne nouvelle statistique ne concerne que les Blancs. La durée de vie moyenne des Noirs américains a en effet stagné à 69,4 ans. Le CDC note également que le taux de mortalité aux Etats-Unis (5,355 pour 1.000) est descendu cette année là à son plus bas niveau historique.

GROSSE COLERE. Le président François Mitterrand a averti fin mars les membres du gouvernement socialiste qu'il leur retirerait leurs portefeuilles ministériels, si certains d'entre eux continuaient à boudier les travaux parlementaires à l'Assemblée nationale ou au Sénat. Le chef de l'Etat français a piqué cette grosse colère pour mettre fin à un absentéisme particulièrement criant le vendredi matin, lors de la séance des questions orales à la Chambre des députés.

DAMES

Problème N. 5



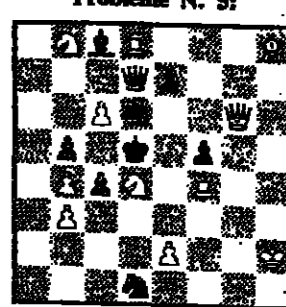
Les blancs gagnent en quatre coups.

Solution du problème N. 4:

B. 10-6; N. 19-3; B. 12-26; N. 1-10; B. 21-6; N. 3-10; B. 21-25; N. 30-21; B. 25-18.

ECHecs

Problème N. 5:



Mat avec les blancs en deux coups.

Solution du problème N. 4:

Tb5-b5.

Expo 92 brings hope and despair to Spanish city

By Francois Raltberger
Reuters

SEVILLE, Spain — The 1992 world fair, Expo 92, is bringing Seville hopes of long-awaited prosperity — as well as fears that it could become a prime target for guerrillas.

The relaxed southern city, which has so far been spared political violence, received a shock this week when police said they had foiled what could have been a massive car-bomb attack by ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom), a separatist group fighting for Basque independence from Spain.

Police said ETA planned to set off 300 kilos of powerful explosives near police headquarters in the crowded city centre.

"We were aware that Expo 92 could be used by terrorists to give their attacks greater echo," a spokesman for the world fair's organisers said.

To many Seville people, the foiled attack brought home the risks of hosting a major world event. The fair, marking the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of America, is to open in April 1992 and will draw an expected 20 million visitors.

Some residents of this city of 800,000 hometown of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, were formerly sceptical about whether the fair would take place at all. Seville is capital of the Andalusia region which has long been bypassed by progress.

But the Expo 92 building site is already bustling with activity as some 1,500 workers toil in clouds of dust on Cartuja Island, just a kilometre from Seville's maze of ancient streets where strollers can enjoy the scent of orange blossom.

Local officials say the idea that the fair will take place and change the face of their region is fast getting through to residents now, as the iron frames of the pavilions rise on the island and the Expo 92 white flag flies from a 100-metre high watchtower above the Guadalquivir River.

Ambassador Emilio Casanovi, who heads the state organising company, told Reuters that 103 countries had so far confirmed they would take part.

Expo 92 Secretary General Jose Luis Ballester said the government had earmarked \$1.3 billion

for the fair.

"But it will not cost taxpayers a single peseta," he quickly added.

Seville's first attempt at staging a major international show — the Hispano-American fair — coincided with the 1929 world economic crash and ended in a financial fiasco. It took Sevillians 40 years to repay the losses through increased local taxes.

Ballester said Expo 92 planned to recoup its investment through the sale of some 40 million entry tickets, television rights, sponsoring by banks and large companies, and the re-sale of pavilions after the fair.

For more expensive were plans to spend another \$7 billion on roads, railways and airports to make the region's poor communications a thing of the past.

By the time Expo 92 opens, Seville should be connected to Madrid by a motorway and by Spain's first high-speed train, taking visitors right into the fair grounds. Another motorway will cross Andalusia from east to west, linking cities that are now more quickly connected by plane through Madrid.

Part of the cost will be borne by the European Community's regional funds to integrate "the south of its south."

"Andalusia had been left aside on the road to progress," said Gaspar Zarria, a member of the regional government. He said Expo 92 was the motor needed for building a long-overdue infrastructure that would leave this agricultural region of six million ready for an economic take-off.

But some Sevillians express reservations. "After 1992, what?" asked a taxi driver.

He gave his own reply: "Prices will go up, and what goes up doesn't come down."

Ballester said that after 1992, some of the Expo 92 pavilions would become a centre for technological training and research that could attract high-technology industries to the region.

Local officials have long said that Andalusia, with its balmy climate and natural beauty, could offer executives a high quality of life and become the California of Europe.

The editor of a regional newspaper hopes Andalusia's dream would come true.

"Otherwise, Expo 92 will have been a cathedral in the desert, a theatre on the Amazon," he said.



A street scene in Dbayeh Palestinian refugee camp, north of Beirut, after a ceasefire was declared in the recent fighting between rival army and militia forces. The camp had survived Lebanon's civil conflict up to now as a relatively safe haven.



A fifth of Dbayeh's houses were totally destroyed. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency carried out an immediate relief operation for the camp's more than 2,000 Christian Palestinian and Lebanese inhabitants.

Lebanese violence spares no-one, not even refugees

Once regarded as a relatively safe haven for Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Dbayeh camp, north of Beirut, was badly hit in recent fighting between rival Lebanese Christian forces.



UNRWA officials were on the scene immediately after the end of the fighting to assess the damage to Dbayeh camp and to organise relief operations. The agency delivered water to the camp and sent in food, clothing and other relief supplies.



Dbayeh residents look on as UNRWA's Lebanon Field Director Franke DeJonge (in light jacket) inspects the damage in the camp. Photos by Niall Kiehy

Tower of London preserves an ancient craft

By Jessica Baldwin
The Associated Press

LONDON — Past the mustachioed befeaters and the worn cobbledstone lanes of the Tower of London, Ted Smith and his son are preserving an ancient craft from extinction.

They are two of the tower's royal armoury craftsmen who restore and conserve its collection of 40,000 pieces of armour.

The 62-year-old Smith, who retires in 1992, is teaching his son Christopher, 26, the art of making armour.

Behind a bright red door, away from the crown jewels and the two million tourists who flock to the 900-year-old tower each year, the Smiths are working together on a replica of a northern Italian knight's fighting helmet. Circa 1460.

Their one concession to modernity is a propane torch.

Where medieval armours had to content themselves with a cumbersome coal forge, the torch makes it easier to work on lance-rests and chanfrons, armour that

protects a horse's head.

"We had a small forge for a while but it blew up a couple of times and, with a gallery directly above us, it wouldn't have been practical," Ted Smith explained.

All other materials and methods they use are those of the ancient armourers.

For the rounded helmet, which juts out at the back to protect the neck, Ted Smith welds the torch while his son hammers the bright orange stain of fire with a large chisel. Their unprotected faces redden as they lean over the smoldering metal.

Chris Smith is also logging their work, planning to publish an illustrated guide to armour-making.

Medieval armourers, too busy preparing knights for battle, left no manuals for future generations. "Armour died out and the trade was never carried on," Ted Smith said.

With intervening conservation work for the royal armoury's vast collection, it takes the Smiths several months to finish a helmet

— an unacceptably long time by medieval standards.

"They would have been quicker because they were more skilled at it," Ted Smith said. "They made helmets all of the time whereas we can go five to 10 years without making a helmet."

The finished replicas get a hands-on and heads-on going over by schoolchildren at educational demonstrations at the tower of London, said spokeswoman Cathy Butler.

Besides the helmet, Chris Smith is assembling a 16th-century Flemish suit of armour used for jousting. The lower left arm plate came from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, in exchange for a chanfron.

The armoury's collection, dating from the arrival of William the conqueror in 1066, includes the armour worn by several English kings, among them Charles I, Charles II and James II.

It also boasts of having the only surviving suit of armour for an elephant, captured by Robert Clive when he defeated the French in India in 1757.

The collection needs constant restoration from air and dust corrosion.

The Smiths and their five assistants also spend a small portion of their time restoring privately owned suits of armour that come in from ancestral homes.

The fee depends on how much work is needed.

Ted Smith, now balding and bespectacled, came to the royal armoury in 1949, after a stint at the Wilkinson Sword Company. Chris joined his father immediately after graduating from school. They are proud of their heritage, and woodcuts of medieval armourers hang on the workshop walls.

An armourer was considered a top craftsman, said Ted Smith. "He would have worked for the king in the King's armoury or for a nobleman. ...the more you see, the more you appreciate what they did, those old people."

"They were damned good," said his son. "We could never get the skill here unless we did it for 40 years."

Iraq affirms Arab right

(Continued from page 1)

apparently to discuss the controversy over Iraq's warning to Israel.

Egyptian embassy officials refused to give any details about Mubarak's visit to Iraq but said he would discuss bilateral and regional issues with President Hussein, who headed the high-ranking delegation that welcomed Mubarak.

Egypt's state-run Middle East News Agency quoted Mubarak as saying hours before his departure to Baghdad that Iraq had no aggressive plans towards Israel and that Hussein has no intention of going to war.

Accompanying Mubarak are Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid, presidential adviser Osama Al Baz and Information Minister Safwat Sharrif.

Kuwait Saturday backed Iraq in its war of words with Israel and the United States and said Baghdad had the right to possess any weapon to defend itself.

"Kuwait, while deploring this campaign and its exposed intentions, sides with brotherly Iraq in its right to defend its safety and security of its people by using all available means," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

"Iraq has for something been facing a biased media campaign waged by hostile Western circles with the support of well-known Zionist circles to deny brotherly Iraq its right to own defensive weapons," it said.

Israel's army deputy chief of staff warned Friday that a combined Syrian, Jordanian and Iraqi

force could threaten Israel's borders.

"We must prepare ourselves for it as if it will come to pass," General Ehud Barak said. "However, we should not see in these preparations a certainty that this will happen."

Barak addressed President Hussein's warning in a rare televised appearance of a high-ranking military officer.

Although Barak saw a future threat in a combined Arab force, he downplayed Iraq's present capability.

"I think (Hussein) will weigh a decision more than twice before he even thinks about attacking Israel with chemical weapons," Barak said.

The deputy chief of staff called Hussein a sane and experienced leader who knew how to compare the Jewish state's military capabilities to Iraq's better than any Israeli citizen.

However, Barak emphasised the need to stop Iraq's attempts to build nuclear capability before it was too late.

"There is no doubt that Iraq has not ceased its attempt to reach nuclear capability," Barak said. "Actions like that of the Americans and British are important and proper."

Hussein's warning dominated Israeli media most of the week.

Tuesday, government officials called for a special programme to distribute gas masks to every Israeli citizen in preparation of a surprise attack.

The Friday newscast ran a repeat on use of gas masks after Barak's interview.

Montpellier — oldest faculty of medicine

By Olivier Lord

THE UNIVERSITY of Montpellier, which includes the oldest faculty of medicine in Europe, recently celebrated its 700th anniversary. On that occasion, the French minister of education announced a plan aimed at improving the everyday life of all students in France.

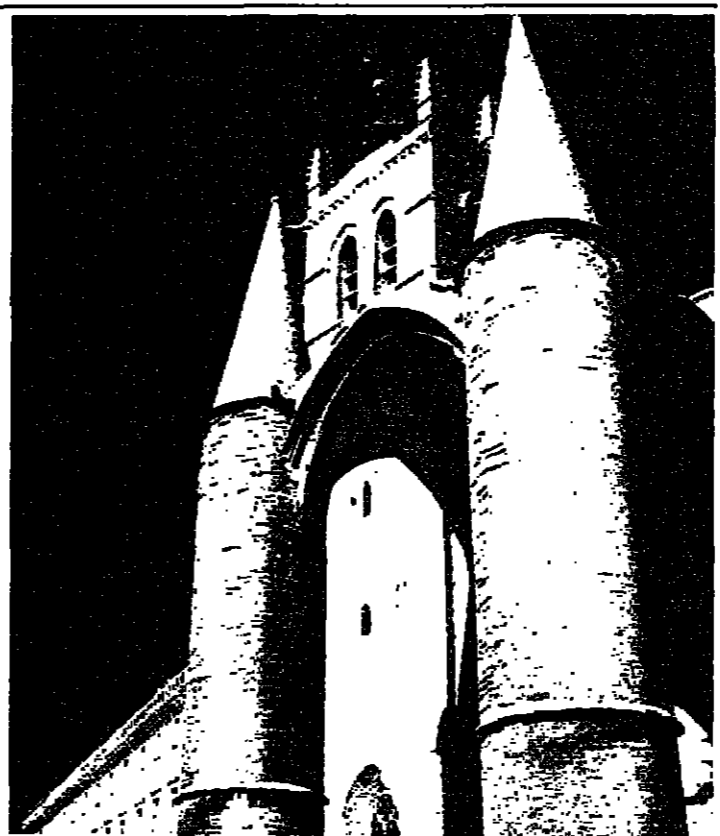
After Paris and Toulouse, Montpellier, the chief town of the Languedoc region, situated on the Mediterranean coast, is the oldest university town in France. Towards the end of 1989, the universities of Montpellier celebrated their 700th anniversary. On Oct. 26th 1289, a bull signed by Pope Nicolas V turned the town's three higher education establishments, which had been founded by local nobles, into a university. These were the School of Art, created in the middle of the 13th century, the Law School, opened in 1180 and, above all, the School of Medicine, founded at the end of the 11th century, making it the oldest faculty of medicine in Europe.

From the moment it was created, the university of medicine of Montpellier benefited from a great degree of freedom and quickly acquired the privilege, which was rare at

the period, from the all-powerful clergy, of carrying out dissections. The most illustrious of all the students who flocked in from neighbouring regions was the humanist and writer Francois Rabelais (who was born around 1494 and died in 1553), the author of Gargantua and Pantagruel.

Today the Montpellier district has some 40,000 students. 39,300 of them attend three establishments: the University of Montpellier I, devoted to law and economics, whose old buildings lie hidden in the maze of little streets in the old town; the University of Montpellier II, devoted to science and medicine, and the University of Montpellier III, devoted to arts and humanities. The last two establishments are located in modern buildings in the near suburbs of the regional capital.

But the district of Montpellier has a fourth university in the town of Perpignan, the chief town of the Pyrénées orientales department. This university, which was created in 1349 and was particularly brilliant at the time of the Renaissance, was banned in the Revolution. It was opened again in 1957 and today has 4,100 students who can study law, humanities and arts.



The ceremonies, organised on the occasion of the University of Montpellier's anniversary, were marked by numerous events. The laboratories of the French National Scientific Research Centre (CNRS) in the town were open to those interested in their activities. A symposium gathered teachers together, particularly from the famous English university town of Oxford. An exhibition showed

medicines made in Montpellier, made with the help of locally gathered plants.

During the commemorative ceremonies, Lionel Jospin, the French Minister of education, announced a forthcoming plan aimed at improving student life. It includes the development of student loans and grants, and the building of new student accommodation and restaurants — (L'Actualité en France).

Drug trade reaches \$500b; defies all efforts

By a U.N. correspondent

THE URGENT need for the international community to step up the battle against the illegal drugs trade is underlined in a report produced by the State Department in Washington.

This warns that world production of major drugs soared last year — with a consequent increase in the incidence of drug abuse. According to United Nations estimates, the illegal trade is now running at a \$500 billion a year level.

The report comes after a special session of the U.N. General Assembly which proclaimed the years 1991-2000 as the world body's Decade against Drug Abuse. During this period it is hoped that an agreed programme of action will be implemented.

Given the fact that the U.S. represents the largest single market for illicit drugs, the State Department's annual surveys are closely studied. The latest records show some success, but admits that these were outweighed by failures.

There were record drug seizures, major traffickers were arrested, extradited or jailed and new international co-operation treaties.

At the same time, however, the report notes that the production of narcotics reached new levels, corruption undermined enforcement efforts, and some governments still failed to show a serious commitment to reducing drug production and trafficking.

Corruption was a particular problem in Bolivia, Laos, Thailand and in the Bekaa area of Lebanon.

The report voices serious concern over the growth in opium production, which was threatening the U.S. with a "potential heroin epidemic." Experts fear that because opium is now being grown in so many regions, the heroin problem could worsen dramatically over the next decade.

Being a General Assembly decision, the U.N. action plan is not legally binding on member states. Nevertheless, many observers believe that the special session revealed a real determination among both developed and developing countries to grapple with the illicit narcotics menace.

The plan is designed to tackle the problem at every phase. Thus, while seeking to reduce consumer demand in the developed world, it will compensate poor, producing nations for the financial losses resulting from the curbing of the drugs trade.

The plan also urges all governments to ratify the U.N.'s anti-drug accord, and especially to follow the U.S.' lead in acceding to the 1988 convention. This helps courts to seize drug smugglers' assets.

The new treaty has been commended by U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh. "For too long," he wrote in a recent press article, "international drug traffickers have been outstripping the civilised nations of the world."

Drug cartels had created multinational enterprises operating on an unprecedented international scale. Hitherto, drug law enforcement had too often been pursued on a national basis, with only occasional co-operative efforts.

But the situation was changing and the 1988 agreement, by providing additional weapons, could greatly enhance the prospects of winning the anti-drugs crusade.

Meanwhile, the U.N. secretary general has been asked to set up an expert study into the world body's own efforts in this field. Many believe that these would be more effective if they were unified instead of being shared between three agencies as at present.

The momentum of the global drive against drug abuse will be maintained by the forthcoming Ministerial summit in London (April 9-11). It is a joint initiative of the U.N. and the British government — (Lion Features).

Violent protests in Gaza

(Continued from page 1)

in the occupied territories in violation of international law.

He said Israel's introduction of new value added tax (VAT) and custom duties in addition to already high taxes were interfering with economic growth in the occupied territories.

"Custom duties and VAT are principle obstacles to economic development," he said.

Shenhadeh said military authorities had refused to give his group a copy of the civil budget saying it was a security matter.

In Arab Jerusalem, a business strike ordered by the uprising's underground leadership and rival Islamic groups was only partly observed, seemingly because of confusion by traders.

Witnesses said that some shops were trading as usual, others completely closed and some compromised by raising their shutters halfway.

'Vigilante force'

An Israeli newspaper said Friday a security firm used by the army to protect Arab collaborators was operating as vigilante force.

The mass-circulation Yedioth Aronoth described the firm, Moked Gilad, as a private army that had stolen weapons from the Israeli army, rampaged through Palestinian villages, beaten Arabs and terrified them with mock executions.

Sources said Moked Gilad had been hired by the Israeli "civil administration" to protect village leaders and Palestinian collaborators.

In one incident reported by Yedioth, a 14-year-old Arab told the newspaper armed security officers from Moked Gilad abducted him from his workplace in the Ariel settlement and took him to a remote site for questioning.

Doubts surface over yen support package at Paris monetary talks

PARIS (R) — The Japanese yen's persistent weakness dominated monetary talks among Western industrial nations Saturday but West Germany and the United States showed little sympathy for a big new support package.

West German Finance Minister Theo Waigel and U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady were expected to tell Japanese monetary officials that this year's slump in the yen was partly the result of internal squabbling over monetary policy in Tokyo.

Bonn indicated it would be reluctant to sell marks on foreign exchange markets to support the yen because it could weaken the West German currency.

The Japanese made the mistake of raising their interest rates too late," a senior West German official attending the talks told journalists. "They should have raised interest rates earlier to avoid a lack of confidence."

The Bank of Japan raised its key discount rate by one percentage point to 5.25 per cent March 20 but that was preceded by an open row with the Ministry of Finance about the size and timing of the move.

Markets saw the rise as too little too late and the yen slumped.

Finance ministers and central bank governors from the group of seven (G-7) nations — the United States, Japan, West Germany, France, Britain, Canada and Italy — were due to work through a long agenda at the one-day talks, including the sweeping changes in Eastern Europe and German unification.

But the talks at the French Finance Ministry were expected to be dominated by the weakness of the yen, trading at a three-year low against the dollar until a slight recovery this week, and turmoil on the Japanese stock market.

Foreign exchange markets are watching closely for signs of a new package of international cooperation to support the yen when trading resumes Monday. But the West German official, who asked not to be identified, appeared to play down this prospect.

Monetary officials said

Washington was also far from convinced that the G-7 should take emergency measures on the yen. Brady was likely to stress that international financial markets had proved resilient to shocks in the past.

This week's agreement between Washington and Tokyo on removing Japanese obstacles to trade will improve the atmosphere of the Paris talks but monetary officials say the United States does not necessarily see the need for a reciprocal gesture in the form of measures to prop up the yen.

According to Japanese officials, Brady and Japanese Finance Minister Rytaro Hashimoto, who met for 30 minutes ahead of the talks, agree that the yen weakness does pose a problem. But it appeared little new ground was broken.

The seven, who since 1985 have sought to act as a directorate for the world economy, now face a dilemma: Failure to agree a yen package could undermine their credibility on currency markets, but their scope for action is very limited.

The West German Bundes-

bank, determined to stamp out inflationary fallout from economic integration of the two Germanys, is expected to veto any move to support the yen that could weaken the mark or require lower interest rates.

The West German official was equally adamant in playing down market fears that German unification could lead to higher interest rates, saying: "There is no reason to raise interest rates as long as the mark stays firm."

U.S. Federal Reserve Board Governor Alan Greenspan is also thought to be reluctant to change U.S. interest rate policy and several key members of the central bank have been openly sceptical about the merits of foreign exchange intervention.

Washington and Bonn's scepticism is expected to be shared by Britain and Italy. But the G-7 has in the past proved to be highly skilled at crisis management and has made a speciality of setting traps to catch markets unawares.

The yen, trading Friday at 157.50 to the dollar, is now well outside a secret G-7 thought by markets to be 120-140 while the mark is steady within its limits.

Report faults U.S.

for 'dangerous dependency' on Japan

Japanese consumers, media generally welcome trade pact

TOKYO (AP) — Some Japanese consumers and newspapers Saturday welcomed the government's pledges to the United States to make structural economic reforms that could fundamentally change their work-obsessed nation.

"Every Japanese citizen was hoping that the talks would force Japan to change its structure," said housewife Noriko Kimura, 55 of Yamato, a Tokyo suburb.

"I thought that the structure of our country could not be changed with Japanese hands," she said. "There is no way around relying on pressure from outside, just like during the occupation."

The unprecedented agreement came in a report issued Thursday by Japan and the United States after four rounds of talks under the structural impediments initiative.

The initiative was devised by the United States last July as a way to attack underlying economic reasons for the United States' \$49 billion trade deficit with Japan.

Although generally reacting positively to the proposed reforms — which include simplifying Japan's distribution system, increasing public works spending, and promoting shorter working hours — some bristled at the degree of U.S. pressure on Japan.

"I think it is a good thing if the United States gets Japanese politicians moving and gets them to change old laws that are no longer useful," said Kumiko Tsukamoto, a nurse at a large Tokyo hospital.

But she said some of the specifics of the agreement, such as the United States calling on Japan to raise public works spending, "is going a bit far."

Mixed media reaction

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun,

the leading Japanese economic daily, wrote that "changing rules are inevitable" as "the international borders of economic activities become blurred."

"Generally, U.S. business rules are obviously more open and universal. It is wise for Japan to accept the U.S. intervention, although it could be painful," the newspaper said.

However, the Mainichi Shimbun daily said in an editorial that "Japan compromised to appease U.S. demands."

"However, by making efforts to make such reforms, Japan can comply with the U.S. demands and benefit its own consumers," it said.

Reform of a law that restricted the spread of large stores, which carry a wider variety of cheaper goods and more imports, won't satisfy all consumers, however.

"It is not necessarily just cheap pricing that we consumers want," said Naokazu Takeuchi, head of the Japan Consumers Union, one of the nation's largest consumer groups. He said large supermarkets charge relatively high prices for produce that is not top quality.

A sudden blossoming of large stores could destroy local shopping communities, he added.

"We have to take many elements — cultural aspects, community relationships — into consideration before making decisions," Takeuchi said.

'Dangerous Dependence'

The United States is becoming dangerously dependent on Japan and the solution lies with American rather than Japanese policies, a group of economists, industrialists and lawmakers say in a new report.

"Praising or blaming Japanese industries or policymakers will not solve our problems, only we can do that," they asserted in a report urging "national mobiliza-

tion" to revitalise U.S. industrial and economic strength.

The 28-page report titled "Dangerous Dependence" was issued Thursday by Rebuild America, a bipartisan policy study group.

It was released at a public forum that organisers said was coincidentally held the same day U.S. and Japanese officials were completing four days of trade talks.

Negotiators at the talks discussed structural and lifestyle changes both countries might make to correct the \$49 billion U.S. trade deficit with Japan.

Wrong focus

Congressman Mel Levine said in the keynote speech at the public forum that the U.S.-Japan discussions, launched last year by President George Bush, are "focusing on the wrong solutions to our trade deficit."

"What we need are not structural impediment talks with Japan, but... talks here at home... talks with industry, labour and government leaders on how to rebuild America."

"America is today living on a Japanese credit card, and to state this truth is not Japan-bashing... the key to revitalising America lies at home, not abroad," he said.

The authors of "Dangerous Dependence" hold differing views about U.S.-Japanese trade disputes, but they agree that America must now mobilise at home to avoid a growing dependence upon Japan that is unhealthy for both countries," said Levine, who is chairman of Rebuild America.

"Japan should do more to open its markets... but focusing on (that) without getting our own house in order is like bailing water from one end of a boat while the other springs a large leak," he said.

Savings and loan bailout could cost \$500b

WASHINGTON (AP) — The price tag on the savings and loan bailout could hit a mind-boggling \$500 billion if the U.S. economy falters, congressional auditors said Friday in their bleakest assessment of the thrift crisis yet.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) said it would cost the government at least \$325 billion to close or sell failed savings institutions. That's greater than the Pentagon's annual budget.

But even the new projection, a sharp 26 per cent higher than the 257 billion estimate offered by the GAO only five months ago, is optimistic, said Comptroller General Charles A. Bowsher, who heads the GAO.

"It could easily become a \$400 billion problem and it might even hit as high as \$500 billion, or half a trillion dollars, if you get the economy working against you," Bowsher told the Senate banking committee.

His testimony at a sparsely attended hearing challenged the Bush administration's contention that regulators have enough money for now and a reassessment can wait until after this year's congressional elections.

Bowsher called on Treasury Secretary Nicholas F. Brady and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Chairman L. William Seidman, who is administering the bailout, to "develop proposals to provide the additional funds."

Senator Donald W. Riegle Jr., the committee chairman, said he would ask the administration to respond at a hearing next month.

This "devastating statement" from the GAO "should be a call to arms for all people involved, from the administration, to Congress to the industry," said Senator Bob Graham.

In past appearances before congressional committees, Seidman has conceded that last year's bailout probably is underfunded. The administration, however, has suggested it could get by through early appropriation of about \$30 billion intended for savings and loans failures after 1992.

Michael Boskin, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, declined to comment on the report but promised, "we'll analyse it in detail."

The GAO's new estimate includes interest payments spread over 40 years, but the bulk of the \$25 billion will be needed during the 1990s. Taxpayers will have to pick up most of the \$68 billion increase, Bowsher said. That likely would push their share of the total above 200 billion, with the savings and loans industry paying the rest.

"We are looking here at a huge, huge number as far as what the American taxpayer is going to have to pay," he said.

The administration had planned to spend \$50 billion to cover losses in savings and loans that fail through 1992.

Failing Greek economy dominates Sunday election

ATHENS (R) — Greece's year-long political crisis looks likely to worsen after elections Sunday which will be dominated by the country's failing economy.

"If we don't make radical reforms on taxation, on spending, on foreign debt, we won't escape from this crisis," the special economic adviser to the outgoing all-party government said.

Greece's problems include the European Community's (EC) highest inflation rate of 16.5 per cent, a black market paying no tax and public debts bigger than the gross domestic product (GDP) of \$55 billion.

"This crisis is very deep and we must take action. Only a strong political government can face this situation," Angelos Angelopoulos told Reuters.

But that looks unlikely. Opinion polls indicate no party will win an absolute majority in the 300-seat parliament and for the third time in 10 months back-room deals will decide the government.

Since the Socialist Party was driven from office in June by a series of financial and political scandals, Greece has been run by weak coalitions of conservatives and Communists and an all-party coalition including the Socialists.

During the political haggling and jockeying over the past year, almost everyone has lamented the disastrous state of the economy but no one has had the power to do anything.

"We are broke," conservative party leader Constantine Mitsotakis said in a television interview. "Unless we have a strong, single party government to sort out the economic mess, there will be chaos."

The previous coalition governments have been unable to take action prompting concern and criticism from the EC.

European Commission President Jacques Delors recently wrote to the government decrying the sharp economic deterioration since 1988 and calling for "immediate and drastic measures."

The most important economic indicators available... show the situation has become very worrying," he wrote.

Delors also questioned Athens' commitment to meet the terms of

a \$1.7 billion EC loan in 1985 and said the country's creditworthiness was at stake.

International organisations have churned out bleak reports, saying massive deficits and borrowing in recent years as the root of the problem.

Private economists said a weak coalition government would be unable to enforce the suggested remedies — raising taxes, freezing wages and cutting state spending.

Mitsotakis said if tough measures were not imposed to cut spending, the budget deficit would reach three trillion drachmas (\$18.7 billion) in 1990 after a record two trillion (\$12.5 billion) in 1989.

Socialist Party leader Andreas Papandreu, prime minister from 1981 until June 1989, has blamed Mitsotakis for Greece's woes, saying the economy was reborn when he handed over power.

Greece's economy was expanding as 4.3 per cent in 1988, its last full year in power, and slowed to 2.4 per cent in 1989. Economists predicate growth of two per cent this year.

Papandreu, a Harvard-trained economist, said the expansion would have enabled Greece to pay its bills but constant "danger and doom-mongering" by the conservatives over the past year had undermined confidence in the economy.

Despite criminal charges against him stemming from a bank scandal, Papandreu has the support of 40 per cent of the voters, largely because of his social welfare programmes.

But even he now admits state spending, which rose to 42.6 per cent of GDP in 1988 from 25.5 in 1980, must be controlled.

He is hoping the welfare cushion, extended to almost every Greek by his administration, and fears of draconian conservative economic measures, will boost his chances Sunday.

Polls indicate conservative New Democracy will again be the largest party, with 44.4 per cent of the vote. Papandreu's Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasek) will have 38.2 per cent and the Communists are given 10 per cent.

ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

Paris bourse soars to new high

PARIS (R) — Share prices on the Paris bourse soared to all-time highs Friday for the second day running as foreign investors bought the stocks of leading French companies, dealers said. "France has become a haven of security for investors," one dealer said. The CAC-40 index of the 40 most frequently traded stocks rose to a record 2,069.89, 2.06 per cent or 35.78 points above Thursday's closing record of 2,034.11. It had gained 98.1 points since last Friday's finish of 1,971.79. France's economy is humming at present. The franc is strong, figures on inflation and economic growth have been favourable and company results have been buoyant so far this year. Earlier this week the Bank of France and leading French banks cut key interest rates.

U.S. jobless rate falls

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. unemployment rate fell to 5.2 per cent during March after holding at 5.3 per cent for nine straight months, the labour department said Friday, but the pace of new-job creation was the slowest in more than three-and-a-half years. Despite the addition of thousands of workers hired by the government to conduct its 10-year census, total payrolls excluding agricultural workers grew by only 26,000 last month after a revised 356,000 gain in February. The March new jobs figure was the smallest gain since June 1986, when the number of jobs fell by 110,000. The number of new jobs created in March, though far weaker than forecast by Wall Street economists, remains consistent with a weakly expanding national economy but may increase concern about the likelihood of a business slowdown. During the fourth quarter of 1989, the U.S. economy grew at its weakest pace since 1986 and the sluggish pattern has continued into the early months of 1990. The department said there was a loss of 96,000 jobs in goods-producing industries during March and an increase of 122,000 service jobs. It said the hiring of census bureau workers accounted for most of the 75,000-job gain in government employment last month. But the main hiring for the census is expected to occur between mid-April and mid-May when about 250,000 people will be taken on temporarily for the national population count.

Soviet-Vietnamese firm reports landmark

BANGKOK (AP) — A Vietnamese-Soviet joint venture has pumped out its three millionth ton of crude oil from Vietnam's southern continental shelf, an official news report said. The firm, Vietsovpetro, tapped the three millionth ton from the Vung Tau-con Dao special zone in the South China Sea March 29, the Vietnam News Agency said. Vietsovpetro, established in 1981, extracted the first barrels of crude from the field on June 26, 1986, it said. It said the firm tapped almost 1.52 million tons of crude last year, 110,000 tons more than the original target. For years, Vietsovpetro had a monopoly in oil exploration but the government has attracted firms from non-communist countries with a liberal foreign investment code promulgated in early 1988. Firms now working in Vietnam include British Petroleum, Hydrocarbons India Ltd., and Petrofina SA of Belgium. The General Department of Oil and Gas was dissolved late last month in a broad reorganisation of government ministries for greater efficiency. Its functions were assumed by the Ministry of Heavy Industry.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Saturday, April 7, 1990					
Central Bank official rates					
	Buy	Sell	French franc		
U.S. dollar	670.0	674.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	425.0	427.5
Pound Sterling	1028.8	1105.4	Dutch guilder	351.0	353.1
Deutsche mark	304.8	317.2	Swedish crown	109.4	110.1
Swiss franc	446.5	449.2	Italian lira (for 100)	53.8	54.1
			Belgian franc (for 10)	190.9	192.0

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY APRIL 8, 1990

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Changes that can be quite beneficial occur today with the Full Moon in Libra coming tomorrow, so be sure to keep an open mind and be objective toward new beginnings, especially where new-comers are concerned.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Now you have a fine day to discuss and think out with businessmen and from any available sources that information that can aid your practical needs.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Consider that you want to bring to the attention of outside associates so that you can make better arrangements with them in the days ahead.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Look for whatever more efficient methods and improvements you can put in effect where daily activities are concerned, then request their potential help.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You need to know more about some recreation or pleasure in which you are planning to engage and this is a good time to do just that.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A situation at your residence requires you handle it with more than usual tact and diplomacy or some unfortunate tensions could remain for some time.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Delve into whatever magazines

and journals are available to get a more well rounded awareness of how to make your daily duties more productive.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You are very much concerned about the practical aspects of your financial position at the moment and can study and uncover ways to later improve them.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You are intensely concerned with yourself and what you want today and tonight but you can ward over potential favours from others by such an attitude.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A friend who is usually very understanding has pressures that do not permit spending as much time with you or on your wishes as you would like.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take some time out now to build up whatever fences of a public nature need to be repaired by you or be more careful at vacation.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Some conditions come to light that can create a big problem for you if you allow them to do so, so pass these by and save yourself grief.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Some of them are very good but it is necessary that you use the yardstick of discrimination for right results.

THE Daily Crossword by Louis Sablin

ACROSS

- 1 Farm tool
- 5 Irene of film
- 10 Don't talk
- 14 Ma Falena
- 15 Dubiniers
- 16 Author
- 17 Knigley
- 20 Elui filler
- 21 Dominions
- 22 Conclude
- 23 March
- 24 Assemblies
- 27 Possesses
- 28 Lace's metal
- 32 Part of RSVP
- 33 Sniggle's catch
- 34 Make beloved
- 35 Foolish
- 39 Large plains
- 40 Spoil
- 41 Tervis'
- 42 Embarrass
- 43 Actor gaps
- 44 Visitor
- 46 Little bits
- 48 C. title:
- 49 Hunting dogs
- 52 Not knowing
- 53 Really clever
- 58 Endure
- 59 Passover feast
- 60 Sunday
- 61 Section
- 62 Wear down
- 63 Actor Montand

DOWN

- 1 Scheme
- 2 Bat wrong
- 3 Merrie
- 4 England
- 5 Prison VIP
- 6 Longed
- 7 Ms Zadora
- 8 Plus items
- 9 Embarrass
- 10 Getting by
- 11 Russ. border
- 12 Dig for
- 13 Requests
- 18 Arm bone
- 19 Rose
- 20 Delf items
- 24 Sacred song
- 25 Strong thread
- 26 Martinelli and
- 27 Attention
- 29 Sierra —
- 30 Softens
- 31 Pay for
- 32 Overhead lines
- 34 Sense of
- 35 Learning
- 36 Penetrating perceptions
- 37 Chicago school
- 38 Uncle —
- 44 Equipment
- 45 Not prepared
- 47 To the point
- 48 Trap
- 49 — eagle
- 50 Isaac's son
- 51 Org.
- 52 Previously owned
- 53 Russ. sea
- 54 Sa routine
- 55 Love good
- 57 Commotion

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

1. Farm tool: HAY
5. Irene of film: ALLEN
10. Don't talk: SHUT UP
14. Ma Falena: MAFALDA
15. Dubiniers: DUBOIS
16. Author: KENNEDY
17. Knigley: KNIGHT
20. Elui filler: ELUI
21. Dominions: DOMINION
22. Conclude: CONCLUDE
23. March: MARCH
24. Assemblies: ASSEMBLY
27. Possesses: POSSESS
28. Lace's metal: LACE
32. Part of RSVP: RSVP
33. Sniggle's catch: SNIGGLE
34. Make beloved: MAKE
35. Foolish: FOOLISH
39. Large plains: PLAINS
40. Spoil: SPOIL
41. Tervis': TERVIS
42. Embarrass: EMBARRASS
43. Actor gaps: ACTOR
44. Visitor: VISITOR
46. Little bits: BITS
48. C. title: C.
49. Hunting dogs: HUNTING
52. Not knowing: NOT
53. Really clever: REALLY
58. Endure: ENDURE
59. Passover feast: PASSOVER
60. Sunday: SUNDAY
61. Section: SECTION
62. Wear down: WEAR
63. Actor Montand: ACTOR

THE BETTER HALF. By Harris

"I'm from the church. We're raising money by selling afterlife insurance policies."

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ROHON
FROOL
YIMTID
BOUTID

THIS MIGHT BE MORE APPRECIATED IF WE WERE GIVEN IT LATER IN LIFE.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: _____

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumble: FUSBY LAUGH BAUBLE GIMLET
Answer: He who indulges — BULGES

Several obstacles to East European bank near resolution

THE HAGUE (R) — Obstacles over Soviet borrowing and U.S. funding levels for a 40-nation development bank for East Europe are almost resolved and an accord could be signed by the end of May, a top Dutch official has said.

Cees Maas, treasurer general at the Dutch Finance Ministry, told a news briefing Friday Moscow would limit its borrowing from the new bank for three to five years to calm U.S. concern that loans to the Soviet Union might use up too much bank capital.

He said the Soviet Union would either promise not to borrow more from the bank than it paid in or restrict loans it takes to no more than 60 per cent of its call capital — the sum it can be summoned to pay into the bank. "Can the Americans live with such voluntary restraint? The answer is yes," said Maas, who is involved in negotiations on setting up the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Finance ministers and central

bank governors from the group of seven (G-7) major industrial nations, meeting in Paris Saturday, are due to discuss issues crucial to the new bank.

The bank is expected to raise 10 billion European Currency Units (ECU) (\$12 billion) in capital from 40 nations in its first five years of operation for loans to boost private enterprise in East Europe.

One obstacle has been U.S. insistence that its contribution to the bank be set in dollars rather than ECUs to avoid budgetary gaps if the dollar's rate drops against the European Community basket of currencies.

Maas said this problem had been resolved. "We will allow the U.S. to commit themselves in dollars, although this will not be allowed for all other currencies," he said.

He added he believed the bank status could be signed by finance ministers of member countries by the end of May, when many of them will be in Paris for a ministerial meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation

and Development (OECD).

Maas was briefing reporters ahead of Monday's civil servants' meeting on the bank in Paris which will try to resolve remaining problems over its location and director.

Eleven cities want its headquarters, including London, Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin. Both former Dutch Finance Minister Onno Ruding and French President Francois Mitterrand's chief economic adviser, Jacques Attali, are candidates to head it.

Maas said the bank would have a 23-member executive board with 11 people from EC countries, four East Europeans, including one from the Soviet Union, four from the rest of Europe and four non-Europeans, including one member each from the United States and Japan.

The EC will provide 51 per cent of the bank's capital, 12.4 per cent will come from East Europe, 11.9 per cent from other European countries and 24.7 per cent from outside Europe.

West all-star team posts 2nd victory

TOKYO (AP) — Associated Press all-American Gary Payton of Oregon State University Saturday scored 16 points, grabbed four rebounds and had 13 assists as the West All-Star team beat the Midwest 101-90 for their second victory in the Japan Classic.

The South Team led 48-42 at halftime and went on to post a 105-100 victory over the East in the day's second game.

The East and South each have 1-win, 1-loss records, while the Midwest is 0-2.

Howard Dexter of Pepperdine University was the West's highest point-getter with 26. He also had six rebounds before half-a-dozen National Basketball Association (NBA) scouts watching the game.

The scouts, including scotty Stirling of the Sacramento Kings, made assessments for the NBA draft scheduled for June 18.

Stirling picked Payton as the best player among 40 selected from 26 U.S. colleges and competing in the Japan Classic, which was formerly the Aloha Classic held in Hawaii.

After the game, Payton said, "I don't care who drafts me, but I hope to join the Sacramento team."

Payton arrived in Tokyo four hours before the start of the first game Friday and he said he did not play well then. But regarding his performance Saturday, he said, "I played much better than yesterday."

Payton's quick passes, skillful dribbling and accurate jumpers impressed nearly 3,500 spectators.

At the end of the first half, the Midwest scored seven points from three field goals and one free throw, including a basket by Purdue University's Ryan Berning with 10 seconds left.

In the second half, the West took the lead for the first time on a jumper by the University of California at Santa Barbara's Eric McArthur with 12:43 left.

With 3:17 left, Payton stole the ball and dribbled upcourt to score two points.

Japanese spectators applauded as Payton fed Japan's Takeshi Yuki for his only basket in the game with 0:28 seconds left.

Four Japanese are playing in each of the four all-star teams to gain experience.

Navratilova, Capriati advance in women's tennis tourney

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina (R) — Top seed Martina Navratilova avenged last week's loss to Katerina Maleeva with a 6-0, 6-1 quarterfinal thrashing of the fifth-seeded Bulgarian at the \$500,000 women's tennis tournament Friday.

Navratilova, who lost in three sets to the 10th-ranked Maleeva on the same clay surface in a semifinal in Houston, said her guard was up this time.

"It was an important match, no doubt about it," world number two Navratilova said of the 55-minute rout. "If I would have lost to her twice in a row it would have been a real negative in terms of my year. But I knew I wasn't going to. Everything was clicking out there."

Navratilova joined American teen sensation Jennifer Capriati in the semifinal round. The 14-year-old rising star overcame a second set lapse to oust eighth-seeded Canadian Helen Kelesi 6-2, 4-6, 6-1 in a match filled with lengthy baseline rallies.

Capriati's semifinal opponent will be sixth seed Natalia Zvereva of the Soviet Union, the 7-6, 6-0 beneficiary of a complete meltdown by fourth-seeded Spaniard Conchita Martinez.

Martinez built a seemingly insurmountable 6-0 tiebreak lead and then lost her touch as Zvereva fought back to 6-6. The

Spaniard became so upset, she threw her racket toward the umpire's chair and received a penalty point that gave the 14th-ranked Zvereva a 7-6 lead.

Zvereva, a finalist here last year, won the next point and raced through the second set without dropping a game as a disheartened Martinez watched in frustration.

The final four was completed by unseeded Regina Raichrtova of Czechoslovakia who upset third-seeded American Zina Garrison 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 to set up a meeting with a Navratilova.

Raichrtova, 46th in the world, took control from 4-3 in the second set and never looked back as she won eight of the last nine games.

In other games, top-seeded Brad Gilbert marched steadily into the semifinals of the \$250,000 Orlando Tennis Classic with a solid 6-3, 6-3 victory over fellow American Joey Rive Friday.

The fifth-ranked Gilbert was pure precision as he dissected Rive in just 70 minutes to advance to a semifinal against American qualifier Malivi Washington.

"I feel if I can control the situation and dictate the way I want things to go, I'm doing good," Gilbert said.

Washington, ranked 152nd in the world, upset fourth-seeded

countryman Scott Davis 6-3, 7-5 to reach his first semifinal since turning professional last September.

"It's a very big win for me," said the 20-year-old Washington, who was the number one college player in the United States in 1988 and 1989. "Anytime you get to a semi this early in your career it's big. I hope I can go a little farther and keep doing well."

The other semifinal pits third-seeded Christo Van Rensburg of South Africa against unseeded American David Pate.

Van Rensburg struggled to eliminate 19-year-old Australian Jason Stoltenberg 6-4, 4-6, 6-1 and Pate posted a 6-4, 7-6 win over unseeded West German Alexis Hombrecher, who reached the quarters on a walkover when second seed Aaron Krickstein withdrew with an injury.

The 117th-ranked Rive's serve-and-volley game was effectively neutralized by Gilbert whose strong return of serve halted Rive's path to the net.

Gilbert broke Rive twice in the opening set and needed just one early service break in the second set to claim his victory and earn the respect of his opponent.

"Brad's a classic counterpuncher," Rive said. "He makes every guy look like he's working so hard and he's doing it so easy. He demoralizes whoever he plays."

U.S. squad 'catching on'

FENTON, Missouri (AP) — The United States may be the underdog of international soccer competition, but it's catching on fast.

"With our athletic ability and the time we've spent together, I think we'll have the ability to surprise some people," said midfielder Tab Ramos, whose team hosts Iceland in a World Cup tuneup Sunday. "We're improving every time out."

The United States has a 2-5 record in a 15-game warmup schedule for its first World Cup appearance in 40 years.

U.S. coach Bob Gansler realizes his team will be at a decided disadvantage against more seasoned squads this summer in Italy, so he'll be satisfied with moderate improvement against Ice-

land. "We need to improve, and we have," Gansler said.

Gansler said the United States played maybe 40 solid, competitive minutes out of 90 against the Soviet Union, a top contender for the World Cup title, in a 3-1 loss Feb. 24 at Stanford, California.

In a 3-2 loss to East Germany March 28, Gansler said his team was competitive for all but about 10 minutes.

More than a victory Sunday, Gansler wants to see that the United States belongs on the field from wire-to-wire.

"Wins and losses definitely matter, because that's why you play the game," Gansler said. "But it's not fatal if we don't win, so long as we improve."

"We realize we need to get some things done in this game."

The United States is coming off a brief European tour that included a 2-0 loss to Hungary March 20 and a 3-2 loss to East Germany March 28. During the warmup series, the United States has beaten Bermuda and Finland, while also losing to Costa Rica, Colombia and the Soviet Union.

The European tour was important because the United States plays three European teams, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Austria, in the first round of the World Cup. The United States opens cup play June 10 against Czechoslovakia at Florence, Italy.

By then, Ramos figures the United States will have at least one advantage.

"A lot of teams are not even together yet because all of their players are playing in professional leagues," Ramos said. "They only get together once a month."

"It's probably the only advantage we'll hold. I hope we'll do well."

Iceland figures to be another challenger for the Americans in the first meeting between the two teams since 1978. Iceland was 1-3-4 in the talented group 3 of European World Cup qualifying, competing against the Soviet Union, East Germany, Austria and Turkey. Iceland tied the Soviet Union 1-1 twice and played to a scoreless tie with Austria, which also qualified for the World Cup.

Gansler said Iceland's style of play was similar to that of Finland, which the United States beat 2-1 March 10.

The United States, which has qualified for the 24-team World Cup field for the first time since 1950, will be missing a couple of its top offensive threats for Sunday's game. Peter Vermes and Chris Sullivan, who joined the team a month ago, both are playing for professional teams in Europe.

Midfielder Hugo Perez also is sidelined with a broken leg.

Lawson, who had been looking forward to racing in his home state, was conscious and talking when taken from the track to community hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, said Dr. Dan Delgado, who treated the fallen rider at the scene.

A spokesman for Lawson's Yamaha team said the reigning world champion was expected to be out of action at least one month and will likely miss the Spanish Grand Prix in addition to

lovakia at Florence, Italy.

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"A lot of teams are not even together yet because all of their players are playing in professional leagues," Ramos said. "They only get together once a month."

"It's probably the only advantage we'll hold. I hope we'll do well."

Iceland figures to be another challenger for the Americans in the first meeting between the two teams since 1978. Iceland was 1-3-4 in the talented group 3 of European World Cup qualifying, competing against the Soviet Union, East Germany, Austria and Turkey. Iceland tied the Soviet Union 1-1 twice and played to a scoreless tie with Austria, which also qualified for the World Cup.

Gansler said Iceland's style of play was similar to that of Finland, which the United States beat 2-1 March 10.

The United States, which has qualified for the 24-team World Cup field for the first time since 1950, will be missing a couple of its top offensive threats for Sunday's game. Peter Vermes and Chris Sullivan, who joined the team a month ago, both are playing for professional teams in Europe.

Midfielder Hugo Perez also is sidelined with a broken leg.

World champion Lawson injured in practice crash

MONTEREY, California (R) — Four-time world champion Eddie Lawson suffered a broken heel Friday when he crashed during the second time practice for Sunday's U.S. Grand Prix motorcycle race at Laguna Seca raceway.

The initial report from track medical personnel was that the American motorcycle star appeared to have broken both his legs. He was taken to a nearby hospital and X-rays revealed that Lawson fractured his right heel and aggravated a left ankle fracture suffered in a crash in Japan last month.

Lawson, who had been looking forward to racing in his home state, was conscious and talking when taken from the track to community hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, said Dr. Dan Delgado, who treated the fallen rider at the scene.

A spokesman for Lawson's Yamaha team said the reigning world champion was expected to be out of action at least one month and will likely miss the Spanish Grand Prix in addition to

Sunday's race.

The crash occurred in the afternoon practice, when Lawson's Yamaha appeared to lose its brakes entering turn 2 of the 2.196-mile (2,534-km) course where the motorcycles are coming off the fastest part of the track into a hairpin.

Lawson, who switched from Honda to the Yamaha team managed by retired world champion Kenny Roberts this season, initially fractured the left ankle in a crash early in the season's first race last month in Suzuka, Japan.

Honda rider Wayne Gardner of Australia was fastest in Friday's timed practice with a lap of one minute 26.758 seconds at an average speed of 91.122 MPH (146.642 KPH) recorded during the morning session.

American Suzuki rider Kevin Schwantz was second fastest in 1:26.805 set during the morning session and his compatriot Wayne Rainey, Lawson's Yamaha team mate who won the season opener in Japan, posted the day's third quickest time of 1:27.028 in the crash-marred-afternoon session.

Comaneci returns to spotlight

RENO, Nevada (AP) — Nadia Comaneci showed an adoring audience that while she no longer has all the graceful moves that won her perfect scores in the Olympics 14 years ago, she still has captivating charm.

In her first public performance in six years, the 28-year-old gymnast who defected from Romania four months ago did cartwheels and black flips for a near-capacity crowd Friday in the 1,800-seat Ziegfeld Theatre inside Bally's Reno Hotel-Casino.

Comaneci also was back in the arms of former coach Bela Karolyi, who came to Reno for a reunion with his star pupil after nearly six years apart. Their emotional hug on stage was reminiscent of the embrace they shared in Montreal after the lithe 14-year-old ran into Karolyi's arms following her dismount from a balance beam that produced her first perfect score.

Fighting off tears, Comaneci told the crowd, "I'm glad to be in my new homeland. This is very emotional for me... I love America. I love you all."

Her coach, in defending Comaneci's recent public relations troubles prompted by tales of spending sprees and a relationship with a married man, said she must have been emotionally lost upon her arrival in the United States.

"Ten years ago, I was standing in the streets of Los Angeles a desperate man," said Karolyi, who left Romania in 1980. "Ten years later, I believe Nadia was just as desperate as me. I am so happy she is here to regain her glory, her status that she deserves."

Comaneci holds 21 gold medals from Olympic and world championship events.

A cast of 16 younger gymnasts, including top-ranked Americans Kim Zmeskal and Lance Ringnald, also was in the performance taped at Bally's for airing April 21 by ABC Sports. But Comaneci was the obvious star and crowd favorite.

"Americans very much want to love Nadia," said two-time Olympic gold medalist Bart Conner, who hosted the show. "In time, I think they will again."

Comaneci was criticized because of her relationship with Constantin Panait, a Romanian emigre from Florida who helped her escape the country under the former regime of Nicolae Ceausescu. Panait is married with children.

Argentines pin hopes on Maradona again

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Argentina's hopes of retaining the World Cup will depend heavily on the form, fitness and mood of their captain and inspiration Diego Maradona.

The soccer genius who rose from a Buenos Aires slum to become a multi-millionaire was the star of the Mexico finals four years ago when he roused a disciplined and skilled, if unspectacular, Argentina to triumph.

National coach Carlos Bilardo is confident he will be able to count on a fully fit and motivated Maradona, despite the player's many off-field problems and quarrels this season.

"I'm more and more convinced that when he finally joins the national team it won't be difficult in the month before (the finals) to produce the best Diego, the one we all want," he said. "Diego is a model of commitment to the colors he defends."

Maradona and several of Argentina's other key men, including new wing sensation Claudio Caniggia, play league soccer in Italy. This will enable them to feel at home, particularly in Naples if Maradona's Napoli win the league title.

Argentina face the Soviet Union and Romania in Naples in their group B games after meeting Cameroon in the opening match in Milan on June 8.

Caniggia, a lightning fast striker, emerged as a brilliant pro-

Floyd leads charge of veterans at Masters

AUGUSTA, Georgia (R) — Raymond Floyd charged past the first-time players that ruled the Masters on opening day by firing a 68 Friday to take a one-shot lead after 36 holes at Augusta National.

The 47-year-old Floyd, who last won a tournament in 1986, the year he became the oldest player to win a U.S. Open, stood at six-under-par 138 after a round that featured four birdies and an eagle at the par-5 8th hole.

In second place was another surprisingly veteran, Scott Hoch, who also posted a 68 — the low round of the day — and would have held a share of the lead except for a bogey at 18.

Hoch is trying to erase his nightmare memory from last year when he muffed a two-foot putt that would have won him the title that he lost to eventual champion Nick Faldo in a sudden-death playoff.

The first 18 holes of the 54th Masters belonged to the uninitiated as Masters rookie Mike Donald fired a 64, one off the course record, to lead by two shots over John Huston, also making his debut at Augusta.

But Donald unravelled from the start Friday, staggering out of the gate with five bogeys in his first six holes, while Huston and Peter Jacobsen, who was third overnight after an opening 67, struggled to hold on.

Huston, whose birdie at number 2 put him at seven-under, finished with a 74 and stood alone in third place at four-under 140.

Donald ended a miserable day with a triple bogey at 18 for an 82 and 146.

Round two belonged to the veterans and some semblance of order returned to the first major championship of the year.

Besides Floyd and Hoch, Jack Nicklaus, appearing in his 32nd Masters, Masashi (Jumbo) Ozaki of Japan and Craig Stadler moved into contention on a day when hazy sunshine gave way to overcast skies and strong winds. Rain that threatened to mar the afternoon held off until the last few holes.

"I'm tickled pink about the way I've played," Floyd said. "This brings back some old memories."

Hoch went a long way toward erasing his unpleasant Masters memory.

"This is the easiest part about the past year, the playing," Hoch said. "Here I can do something about it. When people asked me about it (the missed putt) during the past year all I could say was 'hey, I messed up.'"

Three shots behind Floyd was Ozaki, whose up-and-down round included four birdies and three bogeys.

Bunched at two-under-par 142, four shots off the pace, were Nicklaus, Stadler, Mike Hulbert, Bill Britton and Jacobsen, who suffered doubled bogeys on 13 and 16 after starting his round with 12 successive pars.

Another shot back was a group that included Faldo, double U.S. Open champion Curtis Strange and 1985 Masters champion Bernhard Langer of West Germany.

"It was a long, hard struggle," said Faldo, who shot a 72. "The wind was blowing stronger than

yesterday. But I'm still right in there if I can get some putts to drop."

The 50-year-old Nicklaus, who won last week in his first outing on the Senior tour, rebounded from a double bogey on 12 with three consecutive birdies and was eager for the next half of the tournament.

"I think I have a very good chance. Both my scores could have been a lot lower. I'm looking forward to tomorrow very much," said Nicklaus, the only six-time Masters winner.

Floyd, playing his 26th Masters, also felt rejuvenated. "I really played well on the par-5s. I was five-under-par on them today," said Floyd who birdied three of them and eagled the 8th hole.

"I haven't reached that hole in the last six or seven years," he said.

Forty-nine players survived the cut which was set at 148. Among the most notable casualties were Australian Greg Norman and 1988 champion Sandy Lyle.

Norman, who finished within one shot of the winner in the last three Masters, added a 72 to his opening 78 to finish at 150 and missed his first Masters cut in 10 years at Augusta.

Lyle finished with a 74 for 151 and for the second day in a row was more a threat to the spectators than he was to par.

The Briton, who sent one spectator to hospital Thursday with an errant drive, put another fan into hospital when he hooked a shot on the 2nd hole and struck a third onlooker with a wild approach shot.

Baseball season starts Monday

NEW YORK (R) — The Oakland Athletics, last year's world series champions, again look the best team in American baseball as the 1990 season finally gets underway Monday.

The season was delayed by a week because of a labour dispute. The A's are bidding for their third straight American League West title in what looks easily the strongest division.

Their offence is headed by power-hitting Jose Canseco and fleet-footed base stealer Rickey Henderson while the world series' most valuable player, Dave Stewart, leads the pitching lineup.

The Kansas City Royals and the California Angels, both strengthened by off-season acquisitions, could pose the chief threat to the A's.

The Royals become the first

team ever to start the season with both Cy Young Award winners in Bret Saberhagen and new signing Mark Davis, who saved 44 games for San Diego last year.

Mark Langston has been grabbed from Montreal in the off season free agent scramble to add further depth to the California Angels' pitching staff.

Pitching depth could be a significant factor this year. The shortened spring training season will adversely affect a number of starting pitchers who have had too little time to get their arms properly tuned.

For that reason alone the New York Mets, with six talented starters including two former Cy Young winners in Dwight Gooden and Frank Viola, should win the National League's East division.

The Mets finished six games

behind first-placed Chicago Cubs last year and the first few weeks of the season will show whether they have overcome their tendency to self-destruct.

The National League West looks a highly competitive division with the San Diego Padres, strengthened by the addition of slugger Joe Carter, mounting a strong challenge to defending champions San Francisco Giants.

The Giants retain the services of home run king Kevin Mitchell and first baseman Will Clark but their pitching is painfully weak, as was obvious against the Oakland A's in last season's world series.

The American League East, won last year by the Toronto Blue Jays, remains a division in decline with every team bar the hapless Detroit Tigers a title contender.

Madrid career to an end. Bilardo, however, having failed to find an adequate replacement, persuaded him to make a comeback exclusively for the national team.

"If you got fit you don't know how many problems you'd solve for me in Italy," Bilardo told him.

Valdano said: "I'm not going to be satisfied simply playing in the World Cup. If I give it six months of my life it's because I want to have a decisive influence."

Bilardo may have difficulty building a defence as solid as that which conceded only five goals in seven games in Mexico. Goal-

keeper Nery Pumpido will have to be in top shape for his third World Cup finals.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH
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POINT AND COUNTER-POINT

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ Q 5</p> <p>♥ Q J</p> <p>♦ A Q 10 9 3</p> <p>♣ A J 8 4</p>	<p>EAST</p> <p>♠ 9 8 4</p> <p>♥ 10 9 7 5 3</p> <p>♦ 7 5</p> <p>♣ 10 6 2</p>
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The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 NT	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	4 NT	Pass
5 ♣	Pass	6 NT	Pass

Opening lead: Nine of ♠

We remember more than 20 years ago when Christian Mari and Patrick Huang first blazed into international bridge for their respective countries. In 1969, now grizzled veterans of innumerable encounters, they crossed swords in the 1989 Bermuda Bowl matches, and thrilled the spectators.

North's two-club response was a

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Nepalese army enforces curfew after 50 die in march on palace

KATHMANDU (R) — Nepalese authorities clamped a curfew on Kathmandu Saturday after security forces shot dead up to 50 people to halt a protest march on the royal palace, but fresh signs of revolt were reported outside the capital.

People in Kathmandu, where 100,000 pro-democracy demonstrators were dispersed by gunfire Friday, seemed to be obeying the curfew orders repeated every half-hour on the Himalayan kingdom's state-run radio.

But 15,000 people demonstrated in nearby Bhaktapur, witnesses said. Later people living in the area reported seeing ambulances heading from Bhaktapur towards Kathmandu.

Radio Nepal said six people had died and 107 were injured when police opened fire to halt Friday's demonstrators as they approached the palace of King Birendra, traditionally revered as a descendant of the Hindu god Vishnu.

Witnesses and hospital doctors said 50 people died.

The radio said an indefinite curfew was in force within a 10-kilometre radius of central Kathmandu, including the town of Patan where thousands roamed the streets last week demanding multi-party democracy.

The radio said anyone breaking the curfew would be jailed for a month. Any curfew-breaker deemed to be resisting arrest would be shot dead, the Nepali-language warning said.

It said a two-hour break in the curfew promised earlier had been cancelled. The curfew would stay in force until at least Sunday morning.

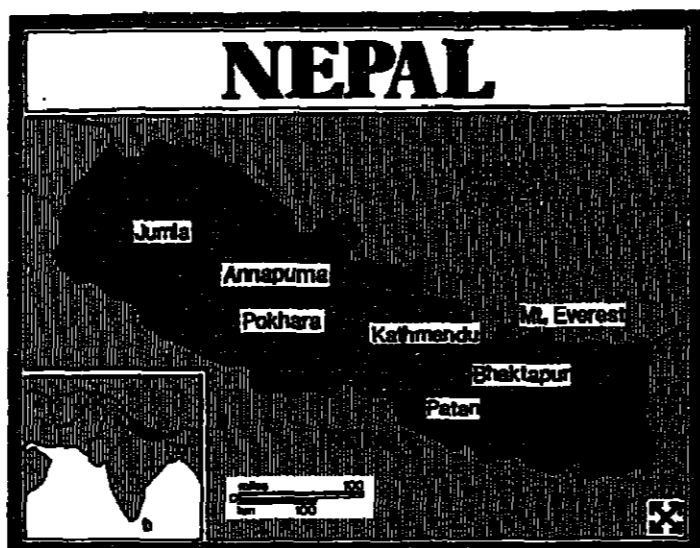
Nepal, wedged between India and Tibet, has been ruled since 1972 by the 44-year-old Birendra who Friday replaced a hardline government with more liberal leaders.

On Saturday several leading government opponents were freed from detention. They included human rights leader Devendra Raj Pandey and the acting general secretary of the Nepali Congress Party, Yog Prasad Upadhyaya.

The Nepali Congress joined forces with seven small Communist factions in February to launch a campaign for open political activity. Political parties have been banned since 1960.

Police broke up demonstrations, with an official death toll of 12, and arrested hundreds of people in the first weeks of the campaign. The crackdown fuelled the past week's mass protest.

Witnesses said Patan, an historic town which residents had turned into a no-go area for police, had been taken over by the army Friday night.



The troops met little resistance, witnesses said. Militant residents who had earlier barricaded out police had gone to Kathmandu to demonstrate and not returned.

Nepali Congress sources said troops shot dead two curfew-breakers and a third person watching them from a balcony in Patan overnight but there was no independent confirmation of this.

Radio Nepal's English-language news broadcasts warned tourists of the curfew.

The British High Commission said Briton Richard Williams died and another Briton, Andrew Reid, was injured in Friday's firing. Hospital sources said a

Dutchman, Dick Boogard, was also injured.

Travel agency sources in New Delhi, the main transit point for Nepal-bound sightseers, said tourist traffic had ground to a halt this week as protesters took over the Kathmandu Valley towns fabled for their Buddhist and Hindu temples and palaces.

Tourism and development aid are the only significant foreign exchange earners for Nepal, where average annual income per head is \$160.

The sources said Kathmandu airport was effectively closed on Saturday because the curfew had kept Nepalese staff away.

Belgian king rules again, but from a damaged throne

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Belgian King Baudouin's two-day suspension as head of state was the second collision in 50 years between the monarchy and its parliamentary democracy.

Parliament's action last Wednesday followed the king's refusal to endorse an abortion bill.

In his absence, the government enacted the bill permitting abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Parliament had approved the legislation on March 29.

The king was reinstated Thursday by an overwhelming margin in parliament, but the monarchy did not emerge unscathed.

The king, whose powers are largely ceremonial, could lose his constitutional role of signing into law bills adopted in parliament, the government said. According to the constitution, bills do not have the force of law without the 59-year-old monarch's signature.

A devout Roman Catholic, the king was suspended at his own request after saying he could not sign the abortion bill.

"Is it normal that I am the only Belgian citizen who must act against his conscience?" He wrote to the government. "Do all

have the freedom of conscience except the King?"

Legal experts and politicians said a Belgian king can only be removed if he is physically or mentally unable to rule.

"The king has driven matters to such a point that a normalisation of relations (between him and parliament) is out of the question," commented the daily De Morgen Friday.

It called the monarch's stand on abortion "an unbearable responsibility" for the parliament.

"When the king refused to sign (the Bill), he knew the risks," said the daily De Standard. "By choosing for his conscience he risked the prestige of the monarchy."

Although by law he is above politics, the monarch takes an active interest in public affairs and regularly consults his ministers.

He has worked hard to reconcile Belgium's 6 million Dutch and 4 million French speakers, whose linguistic differences have felled many governments.

He ascended the throne in 1951 with Belgium on the brink of civil war.

While the monarch has been criticised for putting his conscience

above his duty, he is still seen as an indispensable force in a country divided by language. Few here have called for his abdication.

In fact, last week, opinion polls found most Belgians sympathising with his struggle between conscience and duty.

And the parliament vote to reinstate him was 245-0, with 93 abstentions.

Compared to other royal houses, Belgium's is low-key. The King leads a very private life and newspaper's don't publish royal gossip.

Yet last week's events once again put the spotlight on a man who has known much grief, beginning with his mother's death in a car crash when he was five.

His father, King Leopold III, lost the throne in 1940 for surrendering to Nazi Germany against the government's wish.

After the war, Leopold and his family lived in Geneva, unable to return home because of a furious debate over his wartime behaviour, including a secret meeting with Adolf Hitler and his remarriage to a commoner.

King Leopold returned in 1950 but quickly abdicated as riots erupted across Belgium.

3 killed in Miami Beach hotel fire

MIAMI BEACH, Florida (AP) — Frantic tenants jumped from their windows or groped through smoky hallways as a pre-dawn fire destroyed a three-storey residential hotel Friday, killing three people and injuring 19, officials said.

Fourteen residents were unaccounted for hours after the three-alarm blaze broke out at the Fontana Hotel on Collins Avenue north of Miami Beach's trendy art deco district, fire chief Branaid Dorris said. But officials had no evidence they were trapped inside.

Many of the 100 to 150 residents were retirees, some of whom had to flee without their medications or hearing aids.

"It's a terrible fire. I don't

know how to describe this when you have multiple deaths and you have total destruction of a building," said assistant fire chief John Reed. "I can't even think of the proper word to describe it."

Alfonso Teixeira, a 27-year-old Brazilian, was awakened in his room by a frightened resident.

"I saw this guy running in the hall, 'fire, fire, big, big,'" Teixeira said.

The hotel had smoke alarms but no sprinklers, authorities said. Mayor Alex Daoud said the intensity of the 3 a.m. fire led investigators to suspect arson, but detective Jim Hyde said no evidence of arson had been found in the early stages of the investigation.

Tenants reported a water leak, raising the possibility of an electrical short, Dorris said.

Dorris said crews had entered the building six or eight times by early afternoon but about 30 per cent of the building had collapsed and those areas hadn't been searched for the missing residents. He said it might be Saturday or later before the worst sections are examined.

Residents said the fire broke out near the elevator shaft in the front of the Fontana, and Hyde said the two bodies were found in the lobby area. He put the number of people injured at 18.

"They're not able to get inside yet — it'll be all gone," police Sgt. Jim Scarberry said three hours into the fire.

Support boosted for outsider in Peruvian presidential elections

LIMA (Agencies) — A political outsider, Alberto Fujimori, has thrown Peru's presidential campaign into turmoil with a late surge and could give the front-runner, novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, a close fight in Sunday's election.

With heavy backing from the poor, Fujimori, son of Japanese immigrants, has soared in polls from nowhere to take second place behind Vargas Llosa, so far tipped for certain victory.

Fujimori, a former university rector and talk-show host who has never before been active in politics, has overtaken Vargas Llosa's Socialist rivals in opinion polls and looks set to contest a second round run-off.

If no one wins more than 50 per cent of Sunday's poll, the two leading candidates go into a run-off in May or June.

"It would not surprise us if we had a son of Japanese immigrants in the presidential palace," independent pollster Manuel Saavedra told a news conference.

Figures issued at the news conference put Fujimori's support at 24.4 per cent from less than one per cent a month earlier.

Vargas Llosa slipped from a campaign high of over 50 per cent to 35, while Fujimori's rise pushed Luis Alva Castro of the ruling Aprista Party into third with 17.4 per cent.

Outgoing President Alan Garcia, why by law many not stand for the next term, has been trying to boost Alva Castro in the hope of forging a leftist alliance behind him in the run-off.

The news startled pollsters and, apparently, even Fujimori, but Saavedra said he did not doubt the figures.

Fujimori, 51, also seemed surprised by a packed Friday news conference. "We only expected 30 reporters. We had to quickly get food and drink for 150," said a startled aide.

Peru's Maoist Shining Path guerrillas, determined to disrupt the elections, blew up power lines in the Andean highlands of north-western Peru Friday night.

There were no immediate reports of casualties. The group has killed about 60 people in the past three weeks and maimed dozens more.

"Only armed struggle will bring liberation, not electoral charades," a convicted guerrilla named Claudia told Reuters from her cell in Lima's Canto Grande Prison recently.

Shining Path rebels shot and killed three sailors in a series of pre-election attacks Friday, authorities said.

Two sailors were wounded in the attack near the town of Lucana, on the Apurimac River in Ayacucho Department, 435 kilometres south-east of Lima, the military command said. There was no report of rebel casualties.

Police confirmed Friday that two women and one man were killed Thursday when at least 20 guerrillas attacked the village of Pongora, near Ayacucho.

The guerrillas entered the town in mid-afternoon and shot their victims in front of other villagers, the police said.

In Cerro de Pasco, 195 kilometres northeast of Lima, a rebel bomb Friday destroyed a truck and severely wounded five passengers.

Earlier Friday, a bomb blew two holes in a bridge near Cerro de Pasco, police said.

The attack on the power lines near Huancayo came one hour before a dusk to dawn curfew went into effect.

U.S. may approve supercomputer sale to New Delhi with conditions

WASHINGTON (AP) — After months of debate, the United States has agreed in principle to sell a supercomputer to India that experts warn could be used to make nuclear weapons, sources say.

But the export licence for the Cray Computer depends on India's willingness to adopt measures restricting the computer's use to peaceful research and preventing the transfer of its data to unauthorized people, one source said.

Indian officials are balking at the conditions, noting that another supercomputer bought in 1987 was only being used to forecast monsoons and that India had signed a 1984 agreement promising not to transfer high-tech equipment to other countries, several sources said.

The U.S. Commerce Department, as well as other government agencies involved in approving supercomputer exports, refused to comment on the status of India's request to buy the supercomputer. India's embassy in Washington did not respond to repeated requests for information.

The well-placed informants

who described the new U.S. position on the supercomputer sale to India spoke only on condition of anonymity.

The U.S. government has been ambivalent about exporting the state-of-the-art computers to countries with nuclear capabilities.

Decisions about the sale of similar computers to Israel and Brazil have been stalled for as long as two years, with the Department of Energy and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency lobbying against the deals, said the source.

The computer is destined for the Institute of Science of Bangalore, which conducts a biotechnological and other research, said Indian officials.

Gary Milhollin, director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, said the institute also studies stress on rocket bodies.

Milhollin, whose outfit tracks the spread of nuclear weapons to developing countries, said India could apply the supercomputer data to missile development and its nuclear weapons programme.

The Commerce Department announced last week it had fined a West German company \$800,000 for exporting nuclear material to India and several other countries.

In general, President George Bush's government is easing controls over the export of supercomputers, partly because of growing pressure from manufacturers stung by government budget cuts and partly because of a relaxation in technology exports to formerly Communist governments.

The Commerce Department is pruning and streamlining the list of high-tech items banned for export to Eastern Europe. NATO has been pressing the United States to speed up the process.

In addition, the Commerce Department is redefining which supercomputers must receive special export licences requiring a safeguard plan. Under the proposed new definition, countries buying supercomputers with a capability of up to 150 megaflops — a measure of computing speed — would not be required to adopt a safeguards plan. The previous limit was 100 megaflops.

COLUMN

Police seize fake Dali works

MADRID (R) — Police has seized more than 1,000 fake works attributed to the late Salvador Dali and said this was only a small part of worldwide traffic in forged works attributed to the artist. Etchings, lithographs, tapestries and ceramics purported to have been produced by the surrealist Spanish master were seized at the premises of a Barcelona art dealer together with crates filled with fake certificates of authenticity. The works were seized at the premises of a Barcelona art dealer who works for a Netherlands-registered company that manages copyright of Dali work. "There is a huge international traffic in phoney Dali works," Barcelona police spokesman Francisco Castro said. Experts estimate the annual value of fake Dali works sold around the world, mainly in the United States and Japan, at \$600 million, Castro said. The seized works could have fetched millions of dollars on the market, he said. Descharnes, a former Dali associate, has been stubbornly chasing sellers of fakes or unauthorised reproductions of works by the eccentric Spanish master around the world.

Model work unit riddled with thieves

PEKING (AP) — More than one-third of the 292 employees at a Chinese transport team that had been named a "model work unit" have been charged with stealing, and four have been sentenced to death, an official newspaper reported. The Tuesday edition of Newspapers Digest, seen in Peking Friday, said 113 workers in the No. 1 vehicles team of the Qingdao City Container Transportation Company were implicated in the theft ring. It said four workers were sentenced to death, one to life in prison and 47 to other prison terms. Another 31 received suspended sentences, while the rest were let go, it said. Qingdao, a Yellow Sea port city, had selected the transport team as a model work unit for many years, the report said. It did not say what was stolen, but said that when judges conducted an on-site investigation, no worker dared to claim innocence.

Monkeys served in Brussels restaurant

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Monkey meat is being sold illegally in at least two Brussels restaurants and one shop, the Belgian Animal Protection League has said. The league said it is taking legal action after discovering the sales recently. Monkeys are protected by international conventions and their trade is submitted to official government control. The Belgian Ministry of Agriculture said it had not issued a permit, according to the league. The shop owner, Manny Adelin, told the league she regularly imports the animals from Zaire with all necessary authorisations, including the signed approval of veterinarians in Zaire and Belgium. Her shop sells dried and smoked monkey meat for 800 francs a kilogramme (\$11 a pound). The restaurants, located in the capital's so-called Zaire district, serve snake and alligator as well as fresh monkey. The league said it was unable to get cooperation from Belgian customs and Sabena Belgian World Airlines, which runs a profitable line to Zaire. Customs agents at Brussels airport said they suspected illegal food traffic but added, "We have no time to check all what is going through here." Sabena reportedly declined the league's offer for help in tracking down monkey shipments, saying its animal freight operations might be impeded.

Leaning Tower of Pisa closed for 3 more months

PISA (R) — Pisa authorities have decided to keep the leaning tower, shut for another three months while engineers try to stop it toppling over. The 800-year-old tower leans about five metres, was put off limits after experts said it was dangerous for tourists to climb the white marble tower's 294 steps. Experts have yet to produce a plan to shore up the foundations and parliament has not approved the 140 billion lire (\$110 million) needed for the work. When the tower was first closed Pisa's tourist industry complained it would mean huge economic losses for the city. More than four million tourists a year visit Pisa and a quarter climb the tower.

75 killed, 35 missing in North Sea ferry fire

OSLO (R) — At least 75 people died after fire swept through a Danish ferry in the North Sea early Saturday and 35 others were missing, feared trapped in the vessel.

"Firemen found 75 people dead on board the Scandinavian Star," said Borghild Eldoen, spokeswoman for the Norwegian Rescue Service.

"But they have not yet searched the whole vessel, and 35 to 40 are still missing."

About 330 people abandoned the ship after fire broke out during an overnight trip from Norway to Denmark. A dozen other vessels, backed up by helicopters, picked up most of them unharmed.

The 10,513-ton ferry issued a mayday call at 0130 GMT when it was about 30 miles south of the Faerder Lighthouse at the mouth of the Oslo Fjord, saying a fire was raging through the vessel. The captain said he suspected arson.

Many of the dead were burnt or suffocated. The ferry, billowing smoke, was taken under tow to the Swedish port of Lysekil.

Norwegian NRK public television showed aerial pictures of the white-hulled ship ringed by rescue vessels in calm waters under a blue sky. A tug was trying to douse the flames.

An early estimate of 500 passengers and crew aboard the Scandinavian Star was revised to 450, but Eldoen said there was no firm number.

Most of the passengers were

Norwegians taking an early Easter break to Denmark, where prices for most goods are cheaper than in Norway.

The Norwegian News Agency NTB reported that the ferry's Norwegian captain, Hugo Larsen, suspected arson as the cause of the blaze. It said fire broke out almost simultaneously in two different parts of the vessel.

"Many on board didn't understand what was going on," a man who survived told NRK public radio.

"Many had been drinking and we didn't get any information over the loudspeakers before they ordered us to the lifeboats."

"I smelt smoke, so I got up and came out," a woman who survived said. "There was no organised leadership on deck... the lifeboats were full of people," she said, adding that she had heard no fire alarm.

"The fire aboard the Scandinavian Star is a catastrophe which affects the whole nation," Norway's conservative Prime Minister Jan Syse said in a statement.

He said it was one of the worst disasters in Norwegian waters.

In Sweden, Lars Kalland, a liaison officer with the Gothenburg Rescue Centre, said probably no one was left alive on the ferry.

He added that a Soviet ship helped in the rescue, carrying 44 survivors to Lysekil early this morning. The Scandinavian Star was expected to arrive at the port Saturday evening.

BBC poll gives another blow to Thatcher

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, already embarrassed by a series of disastrous public opinion surveys, suffered another blow when a BBC poll showed only 25 per cent of Britons were content with her leadership.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) poll follows this week's Gallup survey which concluded she is the most unpopular prime minister for over 50 years.

The poll, released late Friday, came as a member of her conservative government admitted the party was panicking about its gloomy prospects.

Arts Minister Richard Luce warned Friday the party could lose power if it kept on bickering. "There is panic in the air," he said in a speech. "It is time the party pulled itself together."

The Conservatives have fallen out of favour because of their anti-inflation policy of high interest rates, which hurts home owners, and a new tax perceived as being hard on the poor.

Thatcher, in power since 1979 and now in her third term of office, is closely linked with the so-called "poll tax" that sparked fierce protests across Britain and London's worst rioting in de-



Margaret Thatcher

cedes.

A Daily Telegraph survey also published Friday gave Thatcher a 24 per cent popularity rating, worse than the previous record of 27 per cent set by Labour leader Harold Wilson in 1968.

Thatcher's standing is the worst recorded since opinion polls began here half a century ago. The popularity slide has brought open debate within the party over whether she should step down before the next general election, due by mid 1992.

The BBC poll carried out for the Newsnight television programme gave the opposition Labour Party a commanding lead with 53 per cent of voters' support against only 30 per cent for the Conservatives.

Thatcher, Britain's first woman leader, is the longest-serving prime minister this century and has said she would like to break more records.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

16 killed in Karachi violence

KARACHI (R) — At least 16 people died in Karachi during nightlong clashes between political activists which reverberated through Pakistan's biggest city. Hospital sources said Saturday the dead included two policemen. At least 25 people were injured after firefights erupted between activists of the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the opposition Mohajir Qami Movement (MQM). The trouble began Friday after three leaders of the PPP's student organisation were ambushed and wounded as they drove through Karachi's central district, police said. The incident sparked clashes throughout the city of eight million people which has seen frequent confrontations since the MQM pulled out of a coalition with the government in October. Both the PPP's Karachi President Rashid Rabbani and MQM chief Altaf Hussain called late night news conferences Friday to blame each other for the upsurge of violence.

14 dead as ferry capsizes in Burma

RANGOON, Burma (AP) — At least 14 people, mostly women and children, were drowned, and some 150 are feared dead after a ferry boat capsized in southern Burma, Burmese radio reported Saturday. The official Rangoon Radio said the double-decker ferry boat Sein San Pya overturned in gale-force winds Friday afternoon with more than 200 people aboard. The ferry was making a regular run on the Gyauing River from the town of Moulmein eastwards to the town of Kyondo in the southern province of Tenasserim, the report said. It sank at about 12:30 p.m. (0530 GMT), the report said. Moulmein is some 160 kilometres southeast of the capital Rangoon.

Poland disbands security police

WARSAW (R) — Poland's parliament has voted to disband the security police responsible for suppressing opposition under the country's former Communist rulers, the Polish News Agency (PAP) reported Saturday. The Sejm (lower house) voted late Friday to abolish the feared SB security service and replace it with a new office for the protection of the state, PAP said. Deputies also voted to disband the Citizens' Militia and create a national police force in its place. The Interior Ministry, whose officials previously held military ranks, will be converted to a civilian ministry and staff pruned from 7,500 to just 1,000.

U.S. chemical arms must be modernised

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The United States must modernise its chemical weapons, a Defence Department official says, because its aging stockpile no longer provides "a credible deterrent to chemical adventurism" targeted against U.S. forces and those of its allies. Dr. Billy Richardson, deputy assistant to the secretary of defence on chemical matters, told a Senate subcommittee on April 5 that the United States remains committed to global, comprehensive, multilateral ban on chemical weapons. He said, however, that an effective chemical weapons (CW) — retaliatory capability must be maintained "during these turbulent times before and during treaty implementation." We need to remain capable of surviving, fighting and retaliating on a chemical battlefield until all CW capable states sign a treaty, Richardson said.

3 mild quakes rattle San Francisco area

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Three mild earthquakes rattled the San Francisco Bay area Friday, upsetting goods on the shelves of a few suburban stores but causing no injuries or serious damage, officials said. The quakes occurred over a six-hour period and were measured at 3.5, 3.8 and 4.5 on the open-ended Richter Scale, said a spokesman for the U.S. Geological Survey at Menlo Park, California. The first was recorded at 1:55 p.m. local time (2155 GMT), the second at 3:30 p.m. (2330 GMT) and the third at 7:39 p.m. (0339 GMT). The Geological Survey said the quakes appeared to have occurred on the Concord fault in a hilly area about 50 kilometres east of San Francisco.

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